DR AMBEDKAR — A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr Ambedkar

A Critical Study

By

W. N. Kuber

PEOPLE'S PUBLISHING HOUSE
New Delhi Ahmedabad Bombay

January 1973 (P 35)

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Price : Rs. 30.00

Printed by D. P. Sinha at New Age **Printing Press, Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi** 55, and published by him for **the People's Publishing House** (P) Ltd., Rani Jhansi **Road, New Delhi 55.**

Dedicated

to the precious memory

of my dear father

18206

PREFACE

This is a study of the social and political thought of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Born in a socially backward caste, educated according to the western system, rational in outlook and somewhat rebellious in temperament, Ambedkar came at the appropriate moment to assume the natural leadership of his kinsmen and participate in the social struggles and constitutional matters in a strategic way. He criticised the caste Hindus (and also Gandhiji and the Congress) for the social neglect of the depressed classes, blamed the British for their political and economic backwardness and stood as the unrivalled champion of the depressed classes, dedicating his life to the cause of their amelioration.

Ambedkar was more than a minority leader. He was a lawyer with forensic intellect and an economist of no mean repute. While the British may be said to have catered to the minority in appointing him Law Member, the Congress and the Constituent Assembly only gave him his due by electing him the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India.

As professor of law and economics, and member of the provincial and central legislatures, as Law and Labour Member of the Viceroy's Council, and later a Union Cabinet Minister in independent India, Ambedkar had a variety of experience of public life and with his deep and penetrating study he produced about a dozen learned, if controversial, books on topics of contemporary interest. He was thus easily one of the very few modern Indian public men whose social and political thought ranging over a variety of subjects deserves to be studied in its entirety.

The present book (abridged version of the Ph.D. Thesis) consists of fifteen chapters. Chapter one contains a brief survey of the condition of the scheduled castes in Indian society and politics. It deals with their role in the light of the freedom movement and the attitude of British rulers towards them and reviews the social reform movement, as also the legislative measures adopted to redress their grievances up to Ambedkar's time. The second chapter is a brief life-sketch.

Chapters three and four are devoted to Ambedkar's *social thought*. Against the background of the Hindu social system chapter three delineates his ideas on the origin of the Shudras, untouchability, caste system (with special reference to caste vis-a-vis democracy, parliamentary government, rule of law and civil service) and the hindrances to its abolition. It also takes account of his views on Brahminism with special reference to the non-Brahmin movement and the Hindu Code. The chapter ends with a review of Ambedkar's social struggles, bringing out his attitude towards society. Chapter four summarises his views on religion and conversion which occupied his major attention at a later stage.

The next nine chapters attempt a treatment of Ambedkar's *political thought*. His views on constitutional matters; his work in the Constituent Assembly; his views on the national movement and its leaders underlying his conflict with Gandhiji and Congress; problems of minorities with special reference to Pakistan; parliamentary democracy; his views on socialist thought, the trade union movement, the labour problems faced as a Labour Member concluding with his views on "Marxism versus Buddhism"; his Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican Party of India and possibilities of anti-Congress front; his ideas on linguistic states; his thoughts on India's foreign policy and second world war; and his views on education and journalism are elaborated in precise terms.

Ambedkar's *economic thought* is discussed in chapter fourteen, which was originally an appendix to the Thesis. This spotlights his views on leading economic problems, such as currency, finance, collective farming and nationalisation of industries. The concluding chapter fifteen attempts an overall estimate of his social and political thought briefly comparing it with that of his contemporaries.

I am deeply indebted to a number of persons and agencies for the generous help received in the preparation of this book. I acknowledge with gratitude the guidance and encouragement I received from Dr D. K. Garde, my guide, and Lokamanya Tilak, professor (now retired), University of Poona. I am indebted to Prof V. M. Sirsikar, Head of the Department of Politics, University of Poona, Dr D. B. Kerur, Viceprincipal, S.P. College, Poona, Dr M. V. Namjoshi, professor, Vaikunthlal Mehta Institute of Cooperative Management, and Prof P. N. Limaye of University of Poona. My thanks are also due to Dr G. Adhikari and Shri S. G. Sardesai who encouraged me, discussed some topics with me and made valuable suggestions. I also acknowledge the help of (1) the Library of *Kesari-Mahratta* Trust, Poona; (2) Jayakar Library of the University of Poona; (3) Library of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona; (4) Bombay University Library, Ambedkar Collections; (5) The Library of the *Times of India*, Bombay.

Kopargaon
Nagar, Maharashtra
26 January 1973

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Correction

Page 97, read **Chapter Five** for **Chapter Four**

Chapter One

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The untouchables form the lowest stratum of Hindu society. They were in that position for centuries together. Various explanations and origins of untouchability are given by sociologists, but the fact remains that touch or shadow or even voice of an untouchable was deemed by caste Hindus as polluting. They were forbidden to keep animals and to use certain metals for ornaments, and had to live in unhygienic outskirts of villages. Their condition was miserable. They were denied the use of public wells, and their children were not admitted to schools attended by caste Hindu children. All temples were closed to them. They could not get service even from barbers and washermen. They were treated by caste Hindus as subhuman. Public services, including police and military services, were closed to them. Naturally they followed hereditary occupations and trades of a degrading order. The social segregation kept them untouchable throughout their life. They remained socially degenerated, economically impoverished, politically servants of the upper classes, and were permanently excluded from educational and cultural opportunities.

The Brahmins were regarded as the gods on earth. The exemption of property from royal claim, freedom from being killed and such others were the privileges of the Brahmins. The four orders of society as seen in the *Purushasukta* denoted not only the origin of the classes but also a divine justification of the order of society.[1] According to Ghurye, special rights for the higher classes and disabilities for the lower ones were almost a universal feature of a class society. The dominance of religion was manifest in every sphere. The most distinctive feature of

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[1] Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India*, p. 182.

Hindu culture was the religious element. Religion was interwoven with the Hindu system of law. The social basis of civilisation was the joint family, the village community and the caste system; the last was regarded as divinely ordained and had religious sanctions.[2] The social life lay for the most part outside the sphere of state activities. It was subject to little political control and was scarcely affected by political revolutions.

In the Islamic medieval period, the Shudras and the untouchables were denied the human rights of education, equality and liberty. Islamic message ended in despair. The Muslim rulers created sardars or noblemen from the caste Hindus; they did not confer these privileges on untouchables. The reason of this Muslim behaviour could be traced to the prevalence of untouchability. The rulers thought that they would have to face opposition of the caste Hindus if they conferred privileges on the untouchables. In the Maratha empire also, though the untouchables, especially Mahars, fought heroically against the Mohammedans, they were not rewarded. Even the great Shivaji could not abolish the system of untouchability.

The Impact of European Civilisation

In the villages, a subsistence economy prevailed. The relationship between individuals and groups was governed not by contract, but by status, i.e. birth in a particular family, and caste largely dominated one's rights and duties.[3]

The progressive transformation of the feudal economy of pre-British India into a capitalist economy was a revolutionary phenomenon. It was bound up with the decay and even extinction of old land relations and artisan and handicraft industries. It was bound up with the decay of old classes associated with old industries and land system and with the rise of new classes resting on new land relations and new modern industries. In place of the village community appeared the modern peasant proprietor and the zamindar, both private owners of land. The British impact on India led to the transformation not only of

[2] O'Malley, *Modern India and the West*, p. 2.

[3] Shriniwas, *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays*, p. 73.

the economic anatomy of the Indian society but also of its social physiognomy.[4]

British conquest brought about an agrarian revolution. It created the prerequisite for the capitalist development of agriculture by introducing individual ownership of land, namely peasant proprietorship and largescale landlord ownership. The capitalist transformation of village economy, and the destruction of the selfsufficient village were a progressive event. The basis of the social change was as follows :

> "The general process of change was due to the disintegration of social system based on group or corporate relations of status, the decline of occupational specialities, increasing use of money, growth of factionalism, changes in the interdependence of castes and a tendency for the depressed to find common cause in economic and political interests; the double process of Sanskritisation and westernisation."[5]

With all other things the British brought with them a casteless culture and a literature full of thoughts on individual liberty. The ideological communication between the two countries brought forth three schools of thought: one school was indoctrinated with western rationalism and it was iconoclastic. The second school of thought stimulated by the new knowledge endeavoured to reform Hinduism from within and preserve its essential truths while freeing it from corruption. The religious sentiment remained and it sought new forms of expression. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Gokhale and Ranade can be grouped in this category. The third consisted of the great body of conservative opinion deeply rooted in sentiment and custom, hostile to the infusion of new ideas or to the adoption of European habits, and suspicious of innovations which it regarded as subversive of the old order of society.[6]

Impact of British Administration

The British government did not recognise caste as a unit empowered to administer justice. Caste retained its cultural integrity. Many aspects of the British administration provided more than sufficient incentive for the consolidation of the caste group. The government of Bombay in its memorandum submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission) complained that the district, local boards where the non-Brahmins have had a majority "have almost in every case attempted to oust the Brahmins regardless of all consideration of efficiency".[7]

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[4] Desai, A. R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 32.

[5] Marriott, *Village India*, p. viii.

[6] O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 66 and 71.

The British rulers of India never gave much thought to the problem of caste, in so far as it affected the nationhood of India. Ever since the 1857 rising, the Indian army was purged of the higher castes. It was regarded that the rising was largely the work of the soldiers of the high-caste Brahmins and Rajputs, and so there was a clamour in England that the high-caste sepoys should be exterminated. It can be safely said that the measures which the Britishers adopted were generally promulgated piecemeal and with due regard to the safety of British domination.[8]

Two marked characteristics of British administration under the crown were its integrity and its insistence on the equality of all before the law. Impersonality and respect for personal liberty were the addition to the whole changed social environment. It was the unifying influence exercised on India by an all-powerful impartial bureaucracy determined to secure equality and dedicated to the establishment of a uniform system of administration.[9]

For the first time in history, India became administratively one. Maintenance of peace and order, rule of law, belief in liberty, modernisation of the country, laying of firm financial foundations for the state, fight against famine and disease, increase in agricultural resources and provision of stable political conditions changed the whole atmosphere of India. India attained common Indian nationality. A common system of law and a uniform code of government produced a large measure of unity. Political association under a single rule began to weld the people of India together. English education, development of modern communications, local selfgoverning institutions, early steps

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7. Simon Commission Report, p. 941.
8. Ghurye, op. cit., pp. 197-99.
9. Griffiths, *The British Impact on India*, p. 229.

towards a small measure of selfgovernment and the foundation of the Congress hastened this process.

British influence on Hindu traditionalism was immense. It led a small but important section of highly educated Indians to abandon their traditional Hindu thought and feeling and adopt a western outlook of life and philosophy. Macaulay's famous "Minutes" on education had its desired result. His aim was to create a class of persons who would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect". K. M. Panikkar described this decision as "the most beneficent revolutionary decision" taken by the government of India.

The insistence on civil liberties, supremacy of law, government by public debate and moral suasion, elections based on universal franchise, extension of the conception of political community to the entire nation, parliamentary democracy, judicial system, a belief in progress and a forward-looking attitude were the far-reaching contributions of British rule.

India was a colonial agrarian appendage of Britain. The replacement of traditional industries by modern ones brought about economic integration of the Indian people. This nation emerged as the offspring of British conquest in India. As a natural consequence of the new capitalist structure, new classes sprang up. The growth of absentee landlords and agricultural proletariat became complete, but the peasant proprietors developed national consciousness. Marx described this bourgeois revolution as "the only genuine social revolution in Indian history".

Attempts of Social Reformers

Energetic attempts to free Hindu society from the evil system of untouchability were going on since Buddha (500 B.C.). He initiated them into his new religion. The ideological and spiritual attempts to abolish untouchability and establish social equality were going on for centuries. Chakradhar, Ramanand, Kabir, Chaitanya, Ekanath, Tukaram, Rohidas, Chokhamela and other saints succeeded to a great extent in establishing spiritual equality and the bhakti (devotion) cult.

Indian social reform movement began with the introduction of new sects. The leaders of these new sects were influenced by the demand for liberty, belief in parliamentary system and conviction that all men had equal rights before god and the law.

In the first half of the 19th century, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the exponent of the era of socio-religious revival in India, preached social equality. The teaching of Raja Ram Mohun Roy and his contemporaries resulted in establishing the Brahmo Samaj which was regarded as a synthesis of Hinduism and Christianity. It not only preached monotheism but also tried to establish a brotherhood wherein man would not be divided from man because of caste. On the same grounds, Prarthana Samaj (the Prayer Cult) was established in Bombay which had thrown caste overboard. Swami Dayanand Saraswati established the Arya Samaj. He preached that the fourfold division of the Hindu people (four varnas) should be substituted for the manifold ramifications of contemporary caste. The important innovation that this school of thought carried out in its programme of reconstruction was that even the fourth class of Hindu society, the Shudras, could study the Vedas. The Arya Samaj tried to revive the ancient purity of Vedic society and appealed to the traditional sentiment of the people; the sincerity of the members of the Arya Samaj was demonstrated in actual practice. The ideological influence of the Ramkrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society must be mentioned in this context. All these movements rendered valuable service in reforming the behaviour patterns in Hindu society in their own ways, and checked the attack of Islam and Christianity on Indian culture.

Apart from the socio-religious revivalist movements in India, in Maharashtra a socio-religious reform movement was started in the second half of the 19th century. M. G. Ranade, Dadoba, Lokahitavadi, Vishnubuva Brahmachari, Phooley were some of the outstanding social reformers. The "change" of social outlook of Ranade was as follows :

> "The change which we should all seek is thus a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a sense of human dignity. This is what I under-

> stand by social revolution both for individuals and for societies in this country."[10]

Jyotiba Phooley carried on his movement for social equality. He founded Satyashodhak Samaj (Society for the Search of Truth) in Maharashtra in 1873. Its purpose was to assert the worth of man irrespective of caste. Phooley's was a revolt against caste in so far as caste denied ordinary human rights to all the members of Hindu society : it was not a non-Brahmin movement to cast off the domination of Brahmins. He started primary schools both for boys and girls of the non-Brahmin castes as early as 1848, and a school for untouchables in 1851. Ranade showed sympathy towards this new movement. It was the late Maharaja of Kolhapur who infused new life into the agitation. Phooley in his evidence before the Hunter Commission in 1884 pleaded for compulsory free education to the untouchables. Phooley's work was revolutionary, but for want of proper organisation and resources the work could not achieve desired result. He was the first man who inspired selfconfidence in the masses. Phooley attacked the supremacy of the upper classes, but he did not realise that the root cause of the misery of the masses was the merciless exploitation by foreign traders and the new imperialist rule.

Role of Christian Missionaries

The Hindus had never been a community, but were a loose confederation of many caste communities, of which the integrated unit was the subcaste (sub because it was supposed to be affiliated to one of the four divisions of society). It was the attack of the Christian missionaries on Hinduism as a whole that first created the idea of such a community in the educated classes.

The Christian missionaries exploited the situation in Hindu society. They pointed out the inequalities in the social fabric of Hindus. They took up the cause of education of the lower classes and the untouchables. They impressed upon them that the upper classes, especially the Brahmins, were against giving education and other facilities to the lower classes. They started schools and hospitals. By their tact, kindness and helping attitude the Christian missionaries succeeded in weaning them away from the Hindu fold. Thousands of untouchables were converted to Christianity. The converts received better treatment from the Hindus. The process continued, and a class of oppressed untouchables, socially hostile to Hindus and favourable to foreign rulers, was formed. This antinational element spread far and wide, affecting adversely the national movement for emancipation. This widened the cleavage between the touchables and untouchables and the problem took a different turn.

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[10] Ranade, M. G., *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 116.

The advent of Christianity, however, did not improve the lot of the untouchables. Socio-economic conditions of the untouchables remained stagnant and continued to be vitiated by casteism up to the last hours of the British regime. The Christian missionaries totally failed to eliminate caste tyranny, economic exploitation and political slavery.

Attempts on the Governmental Level

The imperialist rule in India pursued the policy of noninterference in social and religious matters. This neutral behaviour of the government did not help the untouchables; it only helped the caste Hindus because education was the monopoly of the upper classes.

The British brought about a legal unification of the Indian people on a democratic basis for the first time in Indian history. But that was not without a blemish. There was some discriminatory legislation in favour of the Europeans. Establishment of uniform currency system brought about the economic cohesion of the country. The new ruling classes with new social outlook introduced new legislations. The Castes Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 provided that a person does not forfeit his ordinary rights of property by loss of caste or change of religion. There was a continued agitation by reformers for liberalising the marriage law. There was the Special Marriage Act, 1872. This was amended by the Special Marriage Amendment Act of 1923.[11]

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[11] Ghurye, op. cit., p. 118.

In spite of these attempts the untouchables were devoid of many civil rights. The question of removing their disabilities and placing them on a footing of civil equality came up for consideration before the British administrators. According to the Press Note of 1858, "All schools maintained at the sole cost of government shall be open to all classes of its subjects without distinction." The Press Note of 1915 complained that contact with western civilisation and English education had not successfully combated the old ideas about untouchability. In 1923 the government of Bombay issued a resolution that no grants would be paid to any aided educational institution which refused admission to the children of the depressed classes. In 1925, a bill was passed in Madras Legislative Council throwing open the public utilities to all classes of people, including the depressed classes. After the Montford Reforms the depressed classes got special representation in local and legislative bodies by nomination. As the services were mainly manned by Brahmins and allied castes, they were the first to profit by English education. Their traditional attitude towards caste naturally influenced their dealings with the non-Brahmin classes. The non-Brahmin leaders urged the necessity of special representation. The Government of Bombay Resolution of 7 September 1923 expressly prohibited recruitment into lower classes of government service from the advanced class of Brahmins. The intention of the government was to see certain castes represented in the services of the province. In a modified resolution of 5 February 1925, the absolute restriction on recruitment from the advanced classes was removed.[12]

The question of the education of untouchables was always before the rulers. It came to the forefront by an incident in Dharwar in the old Bombay Presidency. The head of the Government School at Dharwar refused admission to an untouchable boy. The question came up before the Bombay government for consideration. At last in 1858 government announced that it reserved the right of refusing its support "to any partially aided school in which the benefits of education are withheld from any class of person on account of caste and race" and also that "all schools maintained at the cost of government shall be open to all classes of its subjects without distinction".[13]

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[12] Ghurye, op. cit., p. 192.

The attitude of the rulers, though not antagonistic, was not favourable to the untouchables. The government was careful not to antagonise the upper classes by educating the lower classes, especially the untouchables. It always sidetracked the issue as far as possible. Besides, the upper stratum of government officers was composed of Brahmins.

Attempts at Regeneration

The removal of untouchability and all disabilities from which the depressed classes suffered formed an important item in the programmes of all socio-religious movements that sprang up in India during the British rule. Indignation at such an inhuman and unjust institution was a part of the general democratic indignation which developed among the conscious and educated section of the Indian people. Eminent personalities, social and nonpolitical institutions strove by means of propaganda, education and practical measures to restore equal, social, religious and cultural rights to the untouchables.

There was a stir among the depressed classes themselves. The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India was formed under the chairmanship of Justice Chandavarkar on 18 October 1906. It held that the uplift of untouchables would take place through education. It sent a memorandum to the government of India.

The recruitment of Mahars in the army was discontinued after 1892. The Mahars were one of the untouchable castes of Hindus. They were the first who came in contact with the Europeans. They were robust, adaptable, intelligent, fighting and brave. Ramji, father of Ambedkar, protested against this unjust order and approached M. G. Ranade and interviewed the governor of Bombay. The general opinion among Mahars was that the British used them against the native rulers as the Muslims used them for consolidation of their power. The government showed their partiality towards Brahmins. The British government kept the untouchables aloof from education to please the upper classes.

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[13] Ghurye, op. cit., p. 166

The attempts of untouchables to enter the armed services were going on as late as 1915, but they were unsuccessful. The order banning the untouchables in the army was withdrawn on 6 February 1917 and a Mahar Battalion (111) was raised in the first world war (1914-18). When the 111 Mahar Battalion was disbanded, there was a strong protest. The necessity of recruiting Mahars in the army was also emphasised.[14] On 11 November 1917, a conference of the depressed classes was convened under the chairmanship of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. The conference placed the demands of the untouchables before government. In 1917 a resolution was passed to that effect in the Calcutta session of the Congress. On 23 March 1918, a conference for abolition of untouchability was convened under the presidentship of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda. Sir N. G. Chandavarkar was the chairman of the Reception Committee. A Royal Commission to inquire into the grievances of the untouchables was demanded. Social workers before 1920 were under the influence of humanitarian ideas. Christianity had also its effect on the movement. D. D. Gholap, a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, moved a resolution in the Council on 25 July 1921 for free and compulsory education to the untouchables. But the government could not grant this demand. Another MLC of Bombay, C. K. Bole, demanded that public places should be free for untouchables. He warned the government that if this demand was not conceded the untouchables might resort to satyagraha. Vithal Ramji Shinde and Shivram Janba Kamble did pioneering work in promoting the movement for the abolition of untouchability.

Ambedkar Appears on the Scene

The democratic awakening of the depressed classes, their increasing consciousness of their basic human rights, was a part of the general national democratic awakening that had taken place among the Indian people during the British rule. The humanitarian activity of the members of the upper castes reinforcing the rebellious struggles of the submerged sections constituted the social reform movement in India.

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[14] *Kesari* (Marathi weekly), 5 September 1922.

The introduction of railway and buses, modern industries recruiting their labour from both touchables and untouchables, newly developed class-consciousness supplanting caste-consciousness, and restaurants were some of the factors that helped to liquidate caste-inequalities and caste-distinctions. The spread of education accelerated this process. It brought forth a group of intellectuals and passionate fighters for their elementary human rights and political demands. Ambedkar was foremost among them. He wanted social reforms not as philanthropy, but as of right and wanted to create the spirit of independence and self-realisation in the untouchable community. He wanted to produce a "new man"—a new society. His way of social reform was a revolt against social slavery. He wanted the untouchables to stand on their own legs in modern India which was no longer governed by the laws of Manu.

Chapter Two

BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born at Mhow in Central India on 14 April 1891. His father Ramji and grandfather Maloji were in military service. Ramji was proficient in games and straightforward. He was conversant with English. He rose to the rank of a Subedar-Major and was a head instructor in a military school for about fourteen years. After retirement in 1891, on a pension of Rs 50 per month, he settled in Dapoli in the Ratnagiri district. In 1894, he was reemployed as a store-keeper in the Public Works Department, Ratnagiri, and was later transferred to Satara.

Ramji had fourteen children: Bhimrao was the youngest. Bhimabai, Bhimrao's mother died in 1896, when he was only five. His aunt, Mirabai, loved him very much and she ably filled the gap and took care of him. She used to call him Bhiva. Ramji was a teetotaller and never touched meat. He had keen interest in religious and theological discussions. He was an admirer of Phooley.

There were three schools of bhakti prevalent among untouchables, especially Mahars. They were Kabir, Ramanand and Nath. In 1896, Ramji Ambedkar became the follower of Kabir. This bhakti school of thought found consolation in compassion, benevolence and resignation to god. The devotees sought and found moral satisfaction and spiritual solace in Lord Krishna and Shriram. Kabir condemned the caste system, and hence the untouchables who suffered untold miseries on account of the caste system turned to the Kabir cult.

When Bhimrao was five, he was sent to a Marathi school in Dapoli. When his father came to Satara, Bhimrao entered the Government High School, Satara, in 1900, in the first standard. His name in the school was Bhiva Ramji Ambavadekar. The original surname of his family was Sankpal. But his ancestors preferred to call themselves after their ancestral village Ambavade which is in Khed taluka in Ratnagiri district. One teacher named Ambedkar in the Satara High School loved Bhimrao very much and often fed him. He was obliging and kind. As a mark of love and respect to this teacher, Bhimrao began to call himself Ambedkar and, throughout his life, remained grateful to this teacher who treated him so kindly during his school days. When Ambedkar went to the Round Table Conference, this teacher had sent him a congratulatory letter.

Being an untouchable by birth, Ambedkar was forced to sit aside in the school. He could not mix with other boys or play cricket and other games with them. The untouchables were prohibited to learn Sanskrit. The Sanskrit teacher was adamant and did not teach Sanskrit to the untouchables. Ambedkar was forced to take Persian as the second language in the high school. He said, "Though I had the eager desire to learn Sanskrit, I was forced to leave it on account of the narrow attitude of our teachers."[1] The teachers never touched the notebooks of the untouchable students. Some of them did not even ask them to recite poems nor put any questions to them for fear of being polluted. Ambedkar had to face humiliation.

Ramji's service in Satara was terminated in 1904. He decided to shift to Bombay. The family began to stay in a one-room tenement in an old chawl at Parel. It accommodated the grindstone and a she-goat also!

At that time Ambedkar was in the fourth standard. He first joined the Maratha High School, Parel. There being no concessions in this school, he joined Elphinstone High School, a government institute. Being a Mahar, he could not play cricket at Satara, but in Bombay there was no such restriction and he could play the game as much as he wanted. He took his meals at school. He carried tiffin of some of his relatives to the mills. He had a passion for general reading and he used to go to the Charni Road Gardens in Bombay for his study.

Ambedkar passed his matriculation examination in 1907. This was indeed an event to be celebrated in his family. The boy from an untouchable Mahar family passing the entrance examination was the object of admiration. A congratulatory meeting was arranged under the presidentship of S. K. Bole, one of the leaders of the Satyashodhak movement. Krishnarao Arjun Keluskar, who later wrote an exhaustive biography of Shivaji, took a fancy for Ambedkar and presented him with a copy of the life of Gautam Buddha.

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[1] *Navayug* Special Number.

A notable incident in his school life was his marriage. He was in the fifth standard and only 14, when he was married to Ramabai, a sober good girl who was then only nine. She was the daughter of Bhiku Walangkar.

Ambedkar joined the Elphinstone College. The Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda, a progressive ruler, gave him a monthly scholarship of twenty-five rupees. Prof Muller gave him books and clothes. The college hostel-keeper would not offer him tea or water. At this time the family had shifted to a two-room tenement in the Improvement Trust Chawl. Ambedkar's son Yeshwant was born.

Ambedkar passed his B.A. examination in 1913 with English and Persian as his subjects. Though he subsequently made his mark as a scholar, he could not secure any class in the college examinations.

The death of his father on 2 February 1913 was a shock to him. Ramji had sacrificed much to provide education to his son and had to incur debts. He was industrious, abstemious, religious and aspiring.

Despite his father's disapproval Ambedkar accepted an invitation from the Maharaja of Baroda to serve in his state. The higher offices were manned by orthodox upper-class Hindus. The ideas of pollution by touch were so strong that even the peons in his office used to throw the office files at him lest they should be polluted. He could not get residential accommodation in a decent locality. He was staying with Pandit Atma Ram, an Aryasamajist. The social conditions were unfavourable and unbearable for him to continue in the service. He, therefore, decided to resign his post at the earliest opportunity.

Maharaja Sayajirao called him on 4 June 1913. An agreement to serve in Baroda state was signed and in the third week of July

1913, he joined Columbia University as a Gaekwad scholar. He was the first Mahar to study in a foreign university.

In Columbia, he stayed in a cosmopolitan club. He could move there with a status of equality. Life in the Columbia University was a revelation to him, and it enlarged his mental vision.

Professor Seligman, the well-known economist, was his teacher. Ambedkar was studious. He used to study eighteen hours a day. Lala Lajpat Rai, the great national leader, was exiled in America at that time. He used to go daily to the college library. Ambedkar attracted his attention and Lalaji enquired cordially about this untouchable youth. They talked about the national emancipation struggle which was going on in India.

In June 1915, Ambedkar obtained his M.A. degree for his thesis, "Ancient Indian Commerce". In May 1916, he read a paper on "The Castes in India, Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" in the Anthropology Seminar of Dr Goldenweiser. It was published in the *Indian Antiquary* in May 1917. It was also republished in the form of a brochure, the first published work of Dr Ambedkar. Therein he observed that endogamy is the essence of castes. According to him, a caste is an enclosed class and it existed before Manu whom he described as an audacious person and a dare-devil.

In June 1916, Ambedkar submitted his thesis for the degree of Ph.D., entitled "National Dividend for India : A Historic and Analytical Study". It was published eight years afterwards under the title : *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India.* The book was dedicated to Maharaja Sayajirao and had an introduction by Professor S. A. Seligman. "The book proved very useful to the members of the Indian Legislature at the time of the Budget Discussion."[2]

Ambedkar left Columbia University to join the London School of Economics and Political Science as a graduate student in June 1916. Professor Seligman gave him introductory letters to Professor Cannan and Sydney Webb. In October 1916 he got admitted to the Gray's Inn for law. But he had to face a crisis. He returned to India after spending a year in London working on a thesis for the M.Sc. (Econ.) degree. The return before completion of the work was necessitated by the termination of the scholarship granted to him by Maharaja Sayajirao of Baroda. Ambedkar tried to persuade him to continue the scholarship, but without success. He obtained permission of the London University through the recommendation of Prof Cannan to resume his studies within a period not exceeding four years from October 1917.

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[2] Keer, *Ambedkar, Life and Mission,* p. 29.

In July 1917, he was appointed Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda with a view to being groomed for the post of the state's Finance Minister. There was none to receive him. No hotel or hostel accepted him. He took shelter in a Parsi inn and stayed there incognito. He was treated by his staff and peons as a leper. As said earlier, peons flung files and hurled papers at his desk. Drinking water was not available to him in office. This mortifying atmosphere drove him to seek refuge in the Public Library. The Parsis drove him out. He sent a note to the maharaja. The dewan of Baroda expressed his inability to do anything in the matter. He realised that even with his personal attainment he could not soften the prejudices of the caste Hindus. "He sat under a tree and burst into a flood of tears."[3] He left Baroda on account of the ill-treatment meted out to him because of his low caste. Through his friend, K. A. Keluskar, he tried to bring to the notice of Maharaja Sayajirao the insufferable treatment meted out to him, but to no purpose. A professor in Baroda offered to accept him as a paying guest, but later withdrew the offer. Ambedkar returned to Bombay in November 1917, bidding farewell to the state of his benefactor.

A meeting was called by Sambhaji Waghmare and others to felicitate Dr Ambedkar. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, the chairman designate, remained absent!

At this time Ambedkar published a brochure: *Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies.*

In Bombay he tried to model his life anew. Through the good offices of a Parsi gentleman, he became a tutor to two students. He started a business firm offering advice to the dealers in stocks and shares. But as the customers were not ready to go to an untouchable for advice, he had to close it permanently. He looked after the correspondence and accounts of a Parsi gentleman. In November 1918, he learnt about a vacancy of a professor of political economy in Sydenham College, Bombay. He accepted the job on a temporary basis as he had to collect money for his studies in London. The learned doctor impressed the student world. Students from other colleges attended his lectures. But the social treatment remained unchanged. "The high-caste professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the professorial staff."[4] He received Rs 450 a month as his salary. He served in the college from 11 November 1918 to 11 March 1920, and resigned his post to resume his studies in law and economics in London. During his stay for over two years in Bombay, he saved about seven thousand rupees and proceeded to London. The Maharaja of Kolhapur, Shahu Maharaja, also helped him to the extent of fifteen hundred rupees.

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[3] *Janata*, 23 May 1936.

Ambedkar was called upon to give evidence before the Southborough Commission for franchise. A plea for separate electorates was put forth by him. The recommendations of this commission were the basis of the Montford Reforms. The report of the commission was submitted on 22 February 1919. Claims were put forward by non-Brahmin Hindus for separate electorates, but they were also turned down.

On 31 January 1920, Ambedkar started a weekly paper, *Mookanayak* (Leader of the Dumb), to champion the cause of the depressed classes in India. In the editorial of the first number he wrote:

> "The existing newspapers look after the interests of certain castes. They do not pay heed to the interests of other castes... This country is the home (the original word is 'Maher', that is, the mother's house) of inequality. Devoid of power and knowledge, the non-Brahmins and the depressed classes cannot make any progress... Poverty, inability and ignorance have swept away the vast depressed society."[5]

Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur donated one thousand rupees to this paper. But the paper could not last long.

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[4] Ibid., p. 37.

[5] Khairmoday, *Life of Ambedkar*, Vol. II, p. 263.

The conferences of the depressed classes held at Nagpur (1918) and Kolhapur (21 March 1920) under the presidentship of Shahu Maharaja were attended by Ambedkar. In the Nagpur conference (May 1920) he criticised V. R. Shinde and his Depressed Classes Mission started with the support of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. This was the first organised attempt for the uplift of the untouchables. The Servants of India Society sympathised with this cause. "The institutions and individuals have no right to defend the interests of the depressed classes, if they are not run by untouchables"—this was the stand taken by Ambedkar. The conference passed resolutions of no-confidence against V. R. Shinde and others. This Nagpur conference tried to enable the depressed classes to stand on their legs and laid the foundation of Ambedkar's future work.

On 17 December 1917, Dr S. V. Ketkar, the Marathi lexicographer, requested Ambedkar to join him as a contributor for Marathi *Jyanakosha* (Encyclopaedia). Ambedkar refused the invitation. He also refused to read a paper in the economic conference held in December 1918, in spite of the requests by the principal of the Sydenham College.

Ambedkar rejoined the London School of Economics and Politics and also entered Gray's Inn to qualify as barrister in September 1920. His pecuniary circumstances were unsatisfactory. Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur showed his readiness to protect and maintain Ramabai at Kolhapur, which Ambedkar refused though he accepted financial assistance from the maharaja.

In London he started his studies afresh. He joined several libraries, e.g. London University General Library, Goldsmith's Library of Economic Literature, British Museum Library and India Office Library. In the libraries he used to sit throughout the day even without a break for lunch which he could ill afford. He resolutely avoided all diversions such as excursions, theatres and restaurants. He even wrote to his wife that if she found herself in difficulty, she could sell all her ornaments and promised to buy new ones on his return.[6] Many admirers voluntarily offered some help to Ramabai, but she did not accept it.

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[6] Letter to Ramabai, 23 November 1921 (Bombay University, *Ambedkar Collections*).

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In June 1921, Ambedkar's thesis "Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance in British India" was accepted for the M.Sc. (Econ.) degree by the University of London. In 1922-23, he spent some months reading economics in the University of Bonn in Germany. In March 1923, he submitted the thesis "The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution" for the degree of D.Sc. (Econ.). The thesis was returned as the "exposition gave offence to British imperialist examiners, who asked him to rewrite the thesis without changing the conclusions",[7] which he did. He obtained the D.Sc. (Econ.) degree. The thesis was published in December 1923 by P. S. King and Company of London. The book had an introduction by Professor Cannan. He paid glowing tributes to Ambedkar for the stimulating freshness in his views. This book was reissued by Thacker and Company, Bombay, in May 1947 under the title *History of Indian Currency and Banking*, Volume I. Ambedkar was called to the bar in April 1923. In London he met E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and Vithalbhai Patel and had talks with them in respect of the grievances of the untouchables in India.

Ambedkar started legal practice in the High Court of Judicature, Bombay, in June 1923. He had no money even to obtain a sanad. He had joined the appellate side of the Bombay bar. "The solicitors would not condescend to have any business dealings with him on the ground of untouchability."[8] He was content with mofussil work. N. M. Joshi, the trade union leader, helped him in opening his office in Damodar Hall, Parel. Even amidst this general noncooperation, B. G. Modak and D. A. Khare, an advocate, helped him by giving some cases. To supplement the inadequate income from practice, he worked in Batliboi's Accountancy Institute as a professor of merchantile law on a part-time basis for three years. Work at the Bombay University as an examiner gave him additional help.

Ambedkar convened a meeting on 9 March 1924, at the Damodar Hall, Parel, in Bombay to consider the problems of the depressed classes. Following the discussions Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (Association for the Welfare of the Depressed Classes) was formed on 20 July 1924 with Sir Chimanlal Setalvad as president and Ambedkar as the chairman of the managing committee. Dr R. P. Paranjpye, K. F. Nariman and B. G. Kher were the notable figures in the managing committee. To spread education, improve economic conditions and represent the grievances of the depressed classes were the immediate objects of this new sabha.

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[7] Keer, *Ambedkar, Life and Mission*, p. 46.

[8] Ibid., p. 48.

At this time the post of the principal of Sydenham College was vacant, but Dr R. P. Paranjpye, Minister for Education, though sympathetic, could not offer it to him. The professorship in the Elphinstone College, Bombay, like the ministership in the Kolhapur state, was refused by Ambedkar, who preferred to remain free.[9] He resolved not to take any job that would hinder social work.

A newspaper named *Bahishkrit Bharat* was started by him on 3 April 1927. There was a need for a paper to champion the cause of the depressed classes in view of the new reforms. The main line of argument was to get adequate representation in proportion to the population of a community. Temples and watercourses must be thrown open to untouchables. An appeal was made to government to punish the wrong-doers and trespassers who opposed the implementation of the resolution moved by S. K. Bole in the Bombay legislature which stated that every individual, whatever his caste, had the right to move in public places, and had access to schools, public tanks, wells, etc. Towards this end, Ambedkar launched a satyagraha at Mahad in the Kolaba district where untouchables were exhorted to force their access to a tank, but the move was eventually withdrawn. In 1926, he gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Currency and Finance (Hilton-Young Commission). He was nominated with Dr Solanki on the Bombay Legislative Council in 1927.

Ambedkar sought to make higher education cheaper for the lower classes. To him, equality meant the raising of the level of the lower classes to that of the higher. He was emphatic on the point that teaching should not be entrusted to Brahmins alone.

In 1928, he also tabled an amendment to the Bombay Hereditary Offices Act, 1874, seeking to abolish certain hereditary offices, but without success.

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[9] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 128.

In 1928, Ambedkar became a professor in Government Law College, Bombay. He was called to give evidence before the Simon Commission which was subjected to nationwide boycott on account of its all-white character. He, however, gave evidence before the commission as a member of the Bombay Presidency Committee formed for the purpose despite demonstrations by his students and demanded separate electorates for the depressed classes.

According to the recommendations of the Simon Commission, a Round Table Conference was to take place in London in November 1930. The leaders of different political parties were called to London for discussion. Ambedkar was invited as the representative of the untouchables. The Indian National Congress boycotted the conference. National sentiment was opposed to the conference.

In 1930-31, the civil disobedience movement and salt satyagraha were in full swing. But in May 1931, according to Gandhi-Irwin Pact, it was agreed that the Congress should participate in the Second Round Table Conference to be held in London from August to December 1931. Gandhiji, Malaviya and Sarojini Naidu were the delegates of the Indian National Congress. The crux of the whole discussion was the communal problem. It included the question of separate electorates for untouchables.

Gandhiji had claims to the leadership of the untouchables, which Ambedkar opposed. No unanimous agreement was possible; no agreed formula could be evolved as regards the representation. And the Second Round Table Conference ended without any decision.

Gandhiji on return to India had to face a severe crisis. Mass arrests were made and repression followed. Gandhiji was also arrested. In August 1932, Ramsay MacDonald published his Communal Award giving separate electorates to the untouchables. As it would have disrupted Hindu society, Gandhiji opposed it, and launched a fast unto death to get it changed. Though Ambedkar was adamant on separate electorates for untouchables, he accepted joint electorates with reservation of seats at the intervention of Sapru, Jayakar, Malaviya and others. On 24 September

1924, Ambedkar signed with Gandhiji the famous Poona Pact, giving up separate electorates granted to the depressed classes by the Communal Award and accepting instead representation through joint electorates. During 1932-34, Ambedkar was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Constitutional Reforms. He was also a member of the Third Round Table Conference held in London in 1932-33.

In June 1935, Ambedkar was appointed as the principal and Perry professor of jurisprudence in the Government Law College, Bombay. On 13 October 1935, a provincial conference of the depressed classes was held at Yeola in Nasik district. In his presidential address he announced his decision to leave Hinduism. "I was born in Hinduism but I will not die as a Hindu"—was his solemn resolve. Thousands of his followers attending the meeting supported his decision. What religion he was going to accept was not disclosed by him. In December 1935, he was invited by the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore to preside over their annual conference to be held during easter holidays of 1936. His proposed presidential address was not, however, acceptable to the organisers as it went too far and was not, therefore, delivered. In May 1936, he addressed the Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference and advocated the renunciation of Hinduism.

In order to prepare for the elections to the provincial legislatures, under the Government of India Act, 1935, on all-India basis, Ambedkar (who was hitherto nominated by the governor to the Bombay legislature) formed the Independent Labour Party to guard the interests of the depressed classes which mostly formed the labour population. The party secured in the Bombay legislature 15 out of 17 contested seats. The Congress Party with a large majority came into power in 8 out of 15 provinces and Ambedkar joined the opposition in the Bombay legislature.

In August 1937, Ambedkar introduced Khoti and Abolition of Mahar Watan Bill.

In 1938, the Congress Party introduced a bill making a change in the name of untouchables (i.e., they would be called Harijans). Ambedkar criticised the bill, as in his opinion the change of name would make no real change in their conditions.

In July 1942, Ambedkar was appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India as a Labour Member. He held this post till July 1946, despite widespread nationalist criticism. It was during this period that the Indian National Congress had launched its Quit-India movement.

In September 1946, Ambedkar went to England to plead for constitutional safeguards for the untouchables after withdrawal of the British from India, which he visualised in the near future. He felt such safeguards could alone rectify the wrong done to the untouchables by the Cabinet Mission.

The academician in Ambedkar was always alert through the political turmoil. The elections to the Constituent Assembly were on the agenda, but in that stress and strain, he published his work *Who Were the Shudras?* It was an enquiry into how the Shudras came to be the fourth varna in Indo-Aryan society.

In November 1946, Ambedkar was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal. In the next month, in his first speech in the Constituent Assembly, he called for United India. In August 1947, he was appointed by the Constituent Assembly on the drafting committee which elected him as its chairman. As chairman of the drafting committee he presented to the Constituent Assembly the Draft Constitution of India, and piloted it at various stages by answering the criticisms from different quarters. Tributes were paid to his legal acumen, deep study of the constitutional problems and his resourcefulness, and he was called the "Architect of Indian Constitution".

On 15 August 1947, Ambedkar was chosen a Minister for Law in independent India's first cabinet.

In September 1951, Ambedkar tendered his resignation from the Nehru cabinet, accusing the government of apathy towards the scheduled castes, expressing his differences with the cabinet on the Kashmir issue and India's foreign policy and blaming Nehru's policy towards the Hindu Code Bill. In March 1952, he was elected to the Council of States.

Columbia University at its special convocation on 5 June 1952 conferred the degree of LL.D. (*Honoris Causa*) on Ambedkar. The citation said, "The degree is being conferred in recognition of the work done by him in connection with the drafting of India's Constitution." Columbia University hailed Ambedkar as "one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights".[10] Among those who were also honoured were Mr Lester B. Pearson, the then Canadian Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Daniel Mornet, the noted French literary historian, and eight American citizens. It was a strange coincidence that the same university had conferred the Ph.D. degree on Ambedkar thirty-five years earlier.

In August 1955, Ambedkar established Mumbai Rajya Kanishtha Gaokamagar Association. In December 1955, he published his book *Thoughts on Linguistic States.*

Ambedkar's leanings towards Buddhism became vocal after his participation in different conferences. In 1949, he addressed the World Buddhist Conference in Katmandu (Nepal) on "Marxism *versus* Buddhism". In December 1950, he attended the World Buddhist Conference. In July 1951, he formed the Bharatiya Bauddha Janasangh, and in September 1951, compiled a Buddhist prayer book *Bauddha Upasana Patha.* In 1954, he was nominated a delegate to the World Buddhist Conference, Rangoon. In May 1955, he founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha. On 14 October 1956, he embraced Buddhism at a historic ceremony in Nagpur. In November 1956, he went as a delegate to the World Buddhist Conference, Katmandu (Nepal), where he was hailed as *Nav Buddha.*

Ambedkar died on 6 December 1956. His death was mourned by lakhs as their personal loss.

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[10] Jeanette Robbin, *Dr Ambedkar and His Movement,* p. 131.

Chapter Three

PROBLEMS OF HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEM

SECTION I — THE ORIGIN OF SHUDRAS

The principle of *graded inequality* was the basis for determining the terms of associated life as between the four varnas. The Aryasamajists believed that the four varnas of the Indo-Aryan society have been in existence from the very beginning. They believed that the Vedas were eternal and sacrosanct. According to Ambedkar, the portions of the Vedas, at any rate, particularly the Purushasukta, which was the mainstay of the Aryasamajists, were fabrications by Brahmins intended to serve their own purpose. According to him, the Aryasamajists have done a great mischief in making the Hindu society a stationary society by preaching that the Vedas were eternal, without beginning, without end and infallible.[1]

The Purushasukta made the chaturvarnya a "sacred institution", "a divine ordination". In it the Brahmins are described as mouth, the Rajanya or Kshatriyas are described as arms, the Vaishyas as thighs and Shudras as the feet of the Purush. In other words, it was a theory of the origin of the universe, i.e. it was a cosmogony. The Egyptians had a cosmogony somewhat analogous with that set out in the Purushasukta. But the verses 11 and 12 of the Purushasukta were not a mere cosmogony. They contained a divine injunction prescribing a particular form of the constitution of society. Ambedkar said that the constitution of society prescribed by Purushasukta is known as chaturvarnya. He further said that the social order prescribed by Purushasukta has never been questioned by anyone except Buddha.[2] Manu enun-

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1. Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, pp. vii and viii.
2. Ibid., p. 4.

ciated afresh the ideal of the Purushasukta as a part of divine injunction. Manu emphasised that the "Veda is the only and ultimate sanction for dharma. Manu invested the social ideal of chaturvarnya contained in Purushasukta with a degree of divinity and infallibility, which it did not have before."[3]

Ambedkar analysed the Purushasukta as follows:

> "(1) Real is elevated to the dignity of an ideal. (2) No community has given the de facto state of class composition a legal effect by accepting as a de jure connotation of an ideal society. (3) No society has accepted the class composition as an ideal. At the most they have accepted it as being natural. Purushasukta goes farther. It not only regards class composition as natural and ideal, but also regards it as sacred and divine. (4) The number of the classes has never been a matter of dogma in any society known to history. The scheme of Purushasukta makes the division of society into four classes a matter of dogma. (5) The scheme of Purushasukta fixes a permanent warrant of procedure among the different classes, which neither time nor circumstances can alter. The warrant of procedure is based on the principle of graded inequality among the four classes."[4]

With these peculiarities, Ambedkar said, the Purushasukta would really have been unique if it had preached a classless society as an ideal form of society. It preached a class-composed society as its ideal.[5] To him, the Purushasukta followed up the notion of division of labour and converted the scheme of division of work into a scheme of division of workers into fixed and permanent occupational categories.[6] The Purushasukta made the chaturvarnya a sacred institution, a divine ordination. According to him, the attempt of Purushasukta to realise the ideal was a kind of political jugglery, the like of which was not to be found in any other book of religion. He commented that to proceed to make such an ideal real was nothing short of criminal. It was criminal in intent and antisocial in its results. For

[3] Ibid., p. 5.
[4] Ibid., p. 8.
[5] Ibid., p. 5.
[6] Ibid., p. 13.

it aimed to perpetuate an illegal gain obtained by one class and an unjust wrong inflicted upon another. He held that the equation of the different classes to different parts of the body was not a matter of accident. It was deliberate. The part fixed the gradation of the class and the gradation in its turn fixed the function of the class. Brahmins as the custodian of knowledge and learning, Kshatriyas for fighting, Vaishyas for function of industry and trade, and the Shudras were placed last in the social order and were given the filthiest function, namely to serve as menial. Shudras were denied the rights of the three varnas.

Ambedkar summarised the status of a Shudra as follows: (1) that a Shudra was to take the last place in the social order, (2) that a Shudra was impure and therefore no sacred act should be done within his sight and within his hearing, (3) that a Shudra was not to be respected in the same way as the other classes, (4) that the life of a Shudra had no value and anybody may kill him without having to pay compensation and if at all, of small value as compared with that of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya, (5) that the Shudra must not acquire knowledge and it was a sin and a crime to give him education, (6) that a Shudra must not acquire property and a Brahmin could take his property at his pleasure, (7) that a Shudra could not hold office under the state, (8) that the duty and salvation of a Shudra lay in his serving the higher classes, (9) that the higher classes must not intermarry with a Shudra, they could however keep a Shudra woman as a concubine; but if a Shudra touched a woman of the higher classes, he would be liable to dire punishment; (10) that a Shudra was born in servility and must be kept in servility for ever.[7]

The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas had no rights worth speaking against the Shudras. The only traivarnik who had special rights and privileges was the Brahmin. The Shudra was not permitted to accumulate property, because he thereby hurt the Brahmin. A Brahmin should not live in a country where the king was a Shudra. Ambedkar asked: Had the Brahmin any cause to regard the Shudra as his special enemy?

Ambedkar here differentiated between the mode of treatment

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7. Ibid., p. 43.

given by Romans to all the people and by the Brahmins to the men from other varnas. Civil status among Romans had reference chiefly to three things : liberty, citizenship and family. The basis of rights and disabilities was same for all. They did not differ from community to community. Under Brahmanic law, rights and disabilities were not based on general uniform considerations. All rights for the first three varnas and all the disabilities for the Shudras were the principles on which the Brahmanic law was based.[8] But in Rome, plebeians were not slaves. There was complete fusion of patricians and plebeians on terms of equality.[9] Ambedkar asked, "Why did Brahmanic law not abolish the distinction between the traivarniks and the Shudras as the Roman law did by equating the plebeians with the patricians?" According to him, the Roman law of rights and disabilities was not communal while the Brahmanic law was. The Roman law may not have recognised equality in matters of civil and political rights; but in matters of criminal law, it made no distinction between one citizen and another, not even between patrician and plebeian. Under Brahmanic law, for the same offence the punishment varied according to the community of the accused and the community of the complainant.[10]

It was recognised by all that the people who created the Vedic literature belonged to the Aryan race. But Ambedkar contended that the terms Arya and Anarya which occurred in Vedas had not been used in the racial sense at all.[11] In support of his contention he quoted Prof Max Muller's remarks, "There is no Aryan race in blood; Aryan in scientific language is utterly inapplicable to race. It means language and nothing but language; and if we speak of Aryan race at all, we should know that it means no more than Aryan speech. . ."[12] The Aryan race came from outside India and invaded India. According to Tilak, Aryas were in Arctic region. There was the ashwamedha yajna (horse sacrifice). If the horse was not found in the Arctic region, then the Arctic home theory became very precarious. The

[8] Ibid., p. 48.
[9] Ibid., p. 51.
[10] Ibid., p. 53.
[11] Ibid., p. 62.
[12] Max Muller, *Biography of Words*, pp. 89, 120-121.

natives of India were known as Dasas and Dasyus who were racially different from the Aryas. But Ambedkar remarked that, so far as the Rig Veda was concerned, there was not a particle of evidence suggesting the invasion of India by the Aryans from outside India. He gave another evidence so far as the testimony of the Vedic literature was concerned; it was against the theory that the original home of the Aryas was outside India. The rivers were addressed as "My Ganges", "My Jamuna", etc.[13]

According to Ambedkar, there was no military conquest by the Aryans of the non-Aryan races of Dasas and Dasyus. He gave the following facts : (1) There was paucity of references in the Rig Veda to wars between the Aryans and the Dasas. There were sporadic riots between Dasas, Dasyus and Aryas. It was certainly not evidence of a conquest or subjugation. (2) The two races seemed to have arrived at a mutual settlement based on peace with honour. This was borne out by references in Rig Veda showing how Dasas and Aryas have stood as one united people against a common enemy. (3) Whatever the degree of conflict, it was not a conflict of race. It was a conflict which had arisen on account of differences in religions.[14] He concluded that there was, therefore, no evidence in support of the conclusion that the Dasyus belonged to a different race.

Ambedkar maintained that the distinction between Aryas on the one hand and the Dasas and Dasyus on the other was not a racial distinction of colour or physiognomy. That was why a Dasa or a Dasyu could become an Arya. That is why Indra was given the task to separate them from the Arya. To him, the theory of invasion was an invention. The assertion that the Aryas came from outside and invaded India was not proved and the premise that the Dasas and Dasyus were aboriginal tribes of India was demonstratively false.[15] He stated that the theory of the Aryan race was just an assumption and no more. It was based on the philological proposition put forth by Dr Bopp in his epoch-making book called *Comparative Grammar* which appeared in 1835. He called the Aryan race theory as "absurd".

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[13] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, p. 68.

[14] Ibid., p. 69.

[15] Ibid., p. 75.

The theory made the Arya an invader and a conqueror of the non-Aryan native races. The European scholars insisted that the word varna meant colour and the majority of the Brahmin scholars accepted that view.[16] He showed that the Vedic Aryans had no colour prejudices.[17] In support of his contention, he gave another evidence, the evidence from the Zend Avesta as to the meaning of the word varna. It left no doubt that it originally meant a class holding to a particular faith and it had nothing to do with colour or complexion.

The conclusions that followed from the examination of the western theory were summarised by Ambedkar as follows: (1) The Vedas did not know any such race as the Aryan race. (2) There was no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Aryan race and its having conquered the Dasas and Dasyus, supposed to be natives of India. (3) There was no evidence to show that the distinction between Aryas, Dasas and Dasyus was a racial distinction. (4) The Vedas did not support the contention that the Aryas were different in colour from the Dasas and Dasyus.[18]

Ambedkar brought another evidence to show the futility of the Aryan race. He quoted Rig Veda (VI. 33.3) : "Oh Indra, thou hast killed both our opponents, the Dasas and the Aryas." He commented that there were two different communities of Aryas who were not only different but opposed and inimical to each other. According to him, the existence of two Aryas was not a mere matter of conjecture or interpretation.[19]

Originally there were two Vedas—the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda. Why Rig Veda was sacred and the Atharva Veda vulgar? Ambedkar answered that the two belonged to two different Aryan races and it was only when they had become one that the Atharva Veda came to be regarded on par with the Rig Veda. In support of his contention he cited many classics such as Taittiriya Samhita, Shatapatha Brahmana, Mahabharata (Vanaparva and Adiparva) and Ramayana (Second Canto).

[16] Ripley, *Races of Europe*, p. 466.

[17] Ketkar, Dr S. V., *Marathi Encyclopaedia*, Vol. III, p. 42.

[18] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, p. 82.

[19] Ibid., p. 83.

On the basis of caphalic index, Sir Herbert Risley came to the conclusion (in 1901) that the people of India were a mixture of four different races—Aryan, Dravidian, Mongolian and Scythian. His conclusions have been tested by Dr Guha in 1936. Dr Guha concluded that the Indian people were composed of two racial stocks—long-headed and short-headed. The long-headed were in the interior of India and the short-headed were on the skirts. Speaking in terms of the Alpine and the Mediterranean race, the Indian people were composed of two stocks—the Mediterranean or the long-headed race, and the Alpine or the short-headed race.[20]

According to Ambedkar, there is a solid foundation in anthropometry and history in support of the Rig Veda that there were in India two Aryan races and not one. The western theory spoke of one Aryan race and Rig Veda spoke of two Aryan races. He concluded that the Dasas and Dasyus were racially different from the Aryas, so the theory of conquest must take account not merely of a possible conquest of Dasas and Dasyus by Aryas, but also of a possible conquest of Aryas by some other race of Aryas.[21]

Now Ambedkar tackled the problem of relationship between Dasas and Shudras. He showed, "The Dasas and Dasyus were either savages or non-Vedic Aryan tribes. Those of them that were captured in war were probably made slaves and formed the Shudra caste."[22]

There were two propositions : either the Dasas and the Dasyus were one and the same peoples or they and the Shudras were one and the same people. According to Ambedkar, that the Dasas and Dasyus were one and the same people was a proposition of doubtful validity. In Rig Veda, Dasas were referred to separately in 78 places and Dasyus in 78 places. He asked : Why should there be separate references if they did not form two distinct entities? He said that they referred to two different communities. That the Shudras were the same as Dasas and Dasyus was without any foundation whatsoever. In this connection he remarked that the Brahminic writers excelled everybody in the art of investing false etymologies. To him, the Shudra was a proper name of a tribe or a class and was not a derivative word as was sought to be made out.[23]

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[20] Ibid., p. 101.

[21] Ibid., p. 102.

[22] Das, A. C., *Rigvedic Culture*, p. 133.

Patanjali in his Mahabhashya (1.2.3.) mentioned Shudras and their associates with the Abhiras. The Mahabharata (in chapter XXXII of the Sabhaparva) spoke of the republic of Shudras. The Vishnu as well as the Markandeya Puranas referred to the Shudras as a separate tribe among many other tribes and fixed their location in the western part of the country above the Vindhyas.[24]

Ambedkar posed the problem as follows : Were the words Dasyus and Dasas used in the racial sense indicative of their being non-Aryan tribes? Or is there anything to indicate that they were the native tribes of India? In Mahabharata (Shantiparva) there was a conclusive evidence that Dasyus was not used as the name of a non-Aryan tribe. The Indo-Aryans had coined the word Dasyus, a contemptuous name for their enemies. If this was true, then Dasyus could not be regarded as the natives of India.[25]

According to Ambedkar, the Dasas and Dasyus were not a primitive people. They were as civilised as the Aryans and in fact more powerful than Aryans. Dasas and Dasyus were not the same. It was a pure figment of imagination. These names completely disappeared from later Vedic literature. It meant they were completely absorbed by the Vedic Aryans. The early Vedic literature was silent about Shudras. But the later Vedic literature was full of them. Ambedkar concluded that the Shudras were different from the Dasyus and Dasas.

The Dharmasutras said that a Shudra had no right to study the Vedas. But Jaimini mentioned an ancient teacher Badari. His view was that Shudras could perform Vedic sacrifices. It was said that Shudras were not entitled to drink soma. But in the story of Ashvins there was definite evidence that the Shudra had

[23] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, p. 106.
[24] Law, B. C., *Tribes in Ancient India*, p. 350.
[25] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, p. 108.

a right to the divine drink of soma. In Manu it was contended that the Shudra was a non-Aryan. According to Ambedkar this view was contrary to the view taken by the school of Arthashastra. Kautilya called the Shudra an Aryan in the most emphatic and express terms.[26] During the coronation of Yudhishthir, Shudras were invited to be present. In the same context Shudras were members of the two political assemblies of ancient times, namely the Janapada and Paur, and as a member of these the Shudra was entitled to special respect even from a Brahmin. Manu (IV.61) said that a Brahmin should not live in a country where the king was a Shudra. That meant Shudras were kings. Mahabharata (Shantiparva) proved that Shudras were ministers and that they were almost equal to the Brahmins in number. They were rich.

From the instances given above Ambedkar put forth his propositions: (1) Shudras were Aryans. (2) Shudras belonged to the Kshatriya class. (3) Shudras were important as a class of Kshatriyas, that some of the most eminent and powerful kings of the ancient Aryan communities were Shudras. He quoted Prof Weber, "I consequently incline to the view of those who regard the Shudras as an Aryan tribe which immigrated into India before the others", and concluded that Shudras were Aryas and Kshatriyas.[27]

Originally there were three varnas among the Indo-Aryans. Rig Veda did not mention Shudras as a separate varna. Shudras were not regarded as a fourth and a separate varna.

In Purushasukta there were four varnas, but it was a later production. In Sam Veda it had five verses; in Rig Veda 16 verses, in Vajasaneyi Samhita 22 verses. The Atharva Veda was the only Veda which contained a more or less exact reproduction of the Purushasukta of the Rig Veda. But it seemed that it was not an ancient hymn; it was a supplementary form of the Vedas. There was a corroborative evidence in support of the views held by Prof Max Muller and others that the Purushasukta was a later interpolation.

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[26] Ibid., p. 116.
[27] Ibid., p. 144.

Ambedkar said that priests were known to have committed many forgeries. The Brahmins of India were not free from machinations. There is, therefore, nothing surprising if the Brahmins did forge the Purushasukta, if not the whole, at least the two verses 11 and 12 at some later stage, long after the fourth varna had come into being, with a view to giving the system of chaturvarnya the sanction of Veda. He concluded that this Sukta was an addition to the Rig Veda made at a later stage and was, therefore, no proof that there were four varnas from the very beginning of Aryan society. There were only three varnas and the Shudras belonged to the second or Kshatriya varna.

Ambedkar raised the question : If the Shudras belonged to the Kshatriya varna why were they degraded?

He answered : The degradation of the Shudras was the result of a violent conflict between the Shudras and the Brahmins. There was direct evidence of a violent conflict between the Shudra king Sudas and Vasishtha, the Brahmin seer. The enmity between Vasishtha and Vishvamitra was not an enmity between two priests. It was an enmity between a Brahmin priest and a Kshatriya priest. Vishvamitra was the author of many hymns of the Rig Veda and was the author of Gayatri hymn (Rig Veda, III. 62.10). According to Ambedkar the dispute between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas centred round three things : the right to receive gifts; the right to teach Vedas; the right to officiate at the sacrifice. He enunciated the technique employed by Brahmins to degrade the Shudras. The first was to refuse to perform upanayana (thread ceremony) of the Shudras. He said that it was by this technique that the Brahmins accomplished their end and thereby wreaked their vengeance upon the Shudras. The upanayana ended with the teaching by the acharya to the boy of the Vedic mantra known as the Gayatri mantra. According to Ambedkar, thread ceremony was connected with gotra and not with upanayana. The thread ceremony and upanayana had different purposes. At some later date they merged into one. Upanayana meant the teaching of the Veda by the Vedic Brahmin. Ambedkar raised four objections : Was absence of upanayana the test of Shudradom? Did the Shudras ever have the right to upanayana? How could the loss of upanayana result in the general degradation of Shudras? What power did the Brahmins have to deny upanayana to the Shudras?[28]

The Privy Council held that the Kshatriyas still held the rights to upanayana in India. The Bihar High Court decided that Kayasthas were Shudras. The validity of this judgement was not accepted by the Allahabad High Court. The Bengal High Court held that the Kayasthas were Shudras. The Patna High Court held that the Kayasthas of Bihar were Kshatriyas. The decision of the Madras High Court was that the Marathas were Shudras. There were three classes among the Marathas in the Bombay Presidency : the 5 families, the 96 families and the rest. The first two classes were legally Kshatriyas. The Madras High Court held that Yadavas were Shudras.[29]

The denial of upanayana to Shudras made the Shudras look up to the higher classes as their superiors and enabled the three higher classes to look down upon the Shudras as their inferiors. Ambedkar analysed the whole situation in the following way :

Firstly, the right to property was dependent upon the capacity to sacrifice and capacity to sacrifice depended upon upanayana. This meant that only those who were entitled to upanayana had a right to own property. Secondly, a sacrifice must be accompanied by mantras of the Vedas. This meant that the sacrificer must have undergone a course in the study of the Vedas. The study of the Vedas was open only to those persons who had undergone the upanayana ceremony. If there was no upanayana the road to knowledge was closed. Right to property and right to knowledge were the two most important rights conferred by upanayana. He concluded that the stoppage of upanayana was a most deadly weapon discovered by the Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras. It had the effect of an atomic bomb. It did make for the Shudras, to use the language of the Brahmins, a graveyard.[30]

Ambedkar posed the question : What power did the Brahmins have in connection with the upanayana of Shudras? According to him it can be explained by the exclusive right of the Brahmins to officiate at the upanayana and the penalties imposed upon the Brahmins for performing unauthorised upanayana. None but the Brahmin could perform the ceremony; if it was performed by anybody else, it became invalid.

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[28] Ibid., pp. 183-85.
[29] Ibid., p. 188.
[30] Ibid., pp. 197-99.

In support of his contention, Ambedkar referred to the coronation of Shivaji which took place on 6 June 1674. The idea behind Vedic coronation was to obtain social precedence. He analysed and put forth the following four conclusions : (1) Shivaji could not compel any one of them to perform his coronation. (2) Shivaji did not dare to have his coronation performed by a non-Brahmin. (3) It proved that the power of determining the status of a Hindu depended entirely upon the will of the Brahmins. (4) The decisions of the Brahmins on matters of status were open to sale like the indulgences of the catholic clergy. It may be noted that the ministers of Shivaji were the greatest opponents of Shivaji in this project of coronation. They thought that he was a Shudra. He said that what Gaga Bhatta got was more than a fair fee and that it included some part as illegal gratification to keep him straight.[31]

Ambedkar raised a question : Why should a quarrel with a few kings make the Brahmins the enemies of the whole Shudra community? He replied that the Brahmins did not confine their hatred to the offending kings, but extended it to the whole of the Shudra community and applied the ban against upanayana to all Shudras. Their pretensions to social superiority and their claim for special privileges had become outrageous in character and unbearable in content. In all stories of reconciliation Kshatriyas were shown to have undergone an abject surrender. Ambedkar asked : Who could take such dirty, filthy, abominable and vainglorious stories of reconciliation as true historical facts? He replied : Only a supporter of Brahminism could do so.

Ambedkar differentiated between Shudras of Indo-Aryan society and the Shudras of Hindu society. According to him, Shudras of Hindu society were not the racial descendants of the Shudras of Indo-Aryan society. To the Indo-Aryans, the word Shudra was the proper name of one single people. In Hindu society, the word Shudra was an epithet for a low uncultured class of people. The Shudras of Aryan sociey had no connection with the later-day Shudras of Hindu society. He stated that even in times of the Rig Veda, Brahmins were a class themselves and had developed class-consciousness and were keen on maintaining class interests.[32] The performance of upanayana had become an exclusive right of the family priest. The Shudras did not realise what the effect of the loss of upanayana was going to be on their future status.

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[31] Ibid., p. 214.

Ambedkar summarised his theory about the Shudras in the following terms : (1) The Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race. (2) They ranked as the Kshatriya varna in the Indo-Aryan society. (3) There was a time when Indo-Aryan society recognised only three varnas. The Shudras were not a separate varna but a part of the Kshatriya varna. (4) There was a continuous feud between the Shudra kings and the Brahmins, in which the Shudras were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities. (5) As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras due to their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to invest the Shudras with the sacred thread. (6) Owing to the loss of the sacred thread, the Shudras became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and came to form the fourth varna.[33]

SECTION 2 — NATURE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability meant pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular caste or family. It is generally seen that this practice of untouchability is peculiar to Hindu system.

Ambedkar devoted his book *The Untouchables: Who Are They?* to discuss the origin of untouchability. He started with the proposition that "The Hindu civilisation could hardly be called a civilisation. It is a diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity."[34] Along with the development of the notion of defilement, primitive society had developed certain purificatory ceremonies for dispelling impurity. Primitive society had another method of getting rid of impurity. This was to transfer it to another person. Therefore, it could be concluded that there were no people, primitive or ancient, who did not entertain the notion of pollution.[35]

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[32] Kane, P. V., *The History of Dharmashastras,* II (I), p. 29.

[33] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, p. 239.

[34] Ambedkar, *Untouchables: Who Are They?*, Preface.

After having thought over the physical and notional defilement, and hereditary untouchability, Ambedkar turned to another more important problem of the abode of those untouchables. Manu laid down that the antyajas should live and have their abode outside the village. Ambedkar envisaged two possibilities : either from the very beginning they lived outside the village, or they first lived inside the village and afterwards went outside. He discarded the second possibility as absurd and fantastic. The phenomenon was all over India. He said if there was no emperor to do the transplantation, then the second possibility must be abandoned. Therefore the first possibility remained—that they lived outside from the very first.[36]

In primitive society there were nomadic communities—the tribal communities based on blood relationship. In modern society there are settled communities and local communities based on territorial affiliation. The primitive society was nomadic, not because of any migratory instinct, but it was the result of the fact that the earliest form of wealth held by primitive society was cattle. Cattle had the migratory character. This society became a settled community when a new kind of wealth was discovered. It was land. The progress of agriculture became the main source round which the whole society became settled.[37]

There was continuous tribal warfare and as a result of it the problem of defeated tribes arose. A defeated tribe became broken into bits. It was a floating population consisting of groups of broken tribesmen roaming in all directions. They had to live as stray individuals and the shelter and protection became the problem of "Broken Men". The settled communities and the Broken Men struck a bargain whereby the Broken Men agreed to do the work of watch and ward for the settled tribes and the settled tribes agreed to give them food and shelter. As the Broken Men were aliens, they began to live outside the village. This explained why it was natural to suppose that the untouchables from the very beginning lived outside and that untouchability had nothing to do with their living outside the village.[38]

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[35] Ibid., p. 8.
[36] Ibid., p. 26.
[37] Ibid., p. 28.

According to Ambedkar, the untouchable was outside the fold of varna system. The Shudra was a savarna, i.e. one possessing a varna. As against him, the untouchable was avarna, i.e. outside the varna system. In denoting the untouchables, the words antya, antyaja and antyavasin appeared frequently. The Hindu theory of priority in creation did not and could not apply to the untouchables. In Ambedkar's view the word antya meant not the end of creation, but the end of the village. It was a name given to those people who lived on the outskirts of the village. The word antya had the survival value.[39] The primitive society was transformed from tribal into territorial community. For it was the substitution of common territory for common blood as the bond of union that was responsible for the disappearance of the separate quarters of the Broken Men. The system of separate quarters became a perpetual and permanent feature of the Indian village. According to Ambedkar, the Mahars lived outside the village from the beginning because they were Broken Men who belonged to a tribe different from the one to which the settled tribe belonged. The fifty-two rights claimed by the Mahars could be seen in Maharashtra; but there was no surety of their being outside Maharashtra. The Broken Men according to the theory were given quarters outside the village because they belonged to a different tribe, and therefore to different blood.[40]

The various theories of the origin of untouchability were as follows :

The exponent of this racial theory was Stanley Ross. His theory contained two elements—that the untouchables were non-Aryans, non-Dravidian aboriginals and that they were conquered and subjugated by the Dravidians. According to Ross: "There is a strong probability that the outcastes were the survivors of the conquered peoples. They were not the races conquered by the Aryans."[41] According to him, the origin of untouchability was to be found in two circumstances—race and occupation. He further said that there have been two invasions of India: the first was the invasion of India by the Dravidians, and then the invasion of India by the Aryans. The Aryans conquered the Dravidians. Ambedkar commented that "The theory is too mechanical, a mere speculation." According to Ambedkar, the terms Dravidians and Nagas were merely two different names for the same people. Dravidians as Nagas occupied not only the south but the whole of India. The Nagas in North India gave up Tamil which was their mother-tongue and adopted Sanskrit in its place, which meant that the Naga was a racial or cultural name and Dravida was their linguistic name. The Dasas were the same as the Nagas and the Nagas were the same as the Dravidians. Therefore there were only two races: Aryans and Nagas.[42] That the untouchables belonged to a race different from Aryans and Dravidians is disproved.

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[38] Ibid., p. 31.
[39] Ibid., p. 37.
[40] Ibid., p. 40.

The anthropometrical measurements established that the Brahmins and untouchables belonged to the same race. Ambedkar maintained that if the Brahmins were Aryans, the untouchables were also Aryans; if the Brahmins were Dravidians, the untouchables were also Dravidians; if the Brahmins were Nagas, the untouchables were Nagas. Such being the facts, the theory propounded by Ross must be said to be based on a false foundation.[43]

The unit of Hindu society was not the subcaste but the family founded on the rule of exogamy. Kula and gotra were Hindu equivalents of the totem of the primitive society. If the same kula and gotra were found to exist in different castes and communities, it would be possible to say that the castes though socially different were racially one. This problem was studied by Risley (Census 1901). His results flatly contradicted the theory

41. Ross, *Hindu Customs and Their Origins*, pp. 113-15.
42. Ambedkar, *Untouchables: Who Are They?*, p. 58.
43. Ibid., p. 62.

that the untouchables were racially different from the Aryans or the Dravidians. The anthropological investigation showed that the Mahars and Marathas had the same kula. It can be seen that there is hardly a kula among the Mahars which is not to be found among the Marathas. Ambedkar concluded that the racial theory of the origin of untouchability must, therefore, be abandoned.[44]

The soul of chaturvarnya was the basis of the principles of graded inequality. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, if they were slaves, did the work of scavenging. Therefore, it could be stated that the slavery existed in all varnas. Ambedkar asked : "If the scavenging was not loathsome to an Aryan, how can it be said that engaging in filthy occupations was the cause of untouchability?" He concluded that the theory of filthy occupations as an explanation of untouchability was, therefore, not tenable.[45]

Ambedkar discussed the problem of antipathy of Broken Men to Brahmins. According to him the Broken Men were Buddhists. Therefore the Brahmins preached against them contempt and hatred with the result that the Broken Men came to be regarded as untouchables. But there was no direct evidence that the Broken Men were Buddhists. To him, one of the roots of untouchability lay in the hatred and contempt which the Brahmins created against those who were Buddhists. Since untouchability stuck to Broken Men only, it was obvious that there was additional circumstance which had played its part in fastening untouchability upon the Broken Men.[46]

The origin of untouchability could be traced in beef-eating. This fact was known to the Smritikaras. Ambedkar stated that Broken Men, in addition to being Buddhists, retained their habit of beef-eating which gave further ground for offence to the Brahmins.[47]

Manu Smriti[48] did not prohibit the slaughter of cow.

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[44] Ibid., p. 64.
[45] Ibid., p. 68.
[46] Ibid., p. 79.
[47] Ibid., p. 81.
[48] Manu Smriti, V. 11 to 18.

According to Smith : "It is noteworthy that Asoka's rules do not forbid the slaughter of cow which apparently continued to be lawful."[49] Prof Radhakumud Mukerjee said that Asoka did prohibit the slaughter of the cow. But according to Ambedkar Asoka had no particular interest in the cow and owed no special duty to protect her against killing. He said, "the reason I like to suggest is that it was due to their desire to imitate the Brahmins that the non-Brahmins gave up beef-eating".[50]

Ambedkar raised the question : What made the Brahmins become vegetarians? He started with the statement that the Brahmins were the greatest beef-eaters. He said that the yajna of the Brahmins was nothing but the killing of innocent animals, carried on in the name of religion with pomp and ceremony with an attempt to enshroud it in mystery with a view to concealing their appetite for beef. Manu did not regard the cow as a sacred animal; on the other hand, he regarded it as an impure animal whose touch caused ceremonial pollution. He had no objection to the eating of cow's flesh; on the other hand, he did not make the killing of the cow an offence.[51] The explanation of some that the deification of the cow was a manifestation of the Advaita philosophy was regarded by Ambedkar as unsatisfactory. According to him the clue to the reason of cow worship was to be found in the struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism and the means adopted by Brahminism to establish its supremacy over Buddhism. He said that Buddhism was at one time the religion of the majority of the people of India. It continued to be the religion of the masses for hundreds of years. It attacked Brahminism. It was on the defensive. But, it was absolutely impossible for the Brahmins to fight the Buddhists except by accepting their ways and means and practising the Buddhist creed in its extreme form. The Brahmins could do nothing to improve their position against the Buddhists except by giving up the yajna as a form of worship and the sacrifice of the cow.[52]

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[49] Smith, Vincent, *Asoka*, p. 58.

[50] Ambedkar, *Untouchables: Who Are They?*, p. 99.

[51] Manu, V. 18.

[52] Ambedkar, *Untouchables: Who Are They?*, p. 116.

According to Ambedkar, the worship of the cow was the result of the struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism. Buddhism was against animal sacrifice in general. It had no particular affection for the cow. As stated earlier Asoka had no particular reason to make a law to save the cow. Cow-killing was made a mortal sin by the Gupta kings who were the champions of Hinduism.[53] The object of the Brahmins in giving up beef-eating was to snatch away from the Buddhist bhikkus the supremacy they had acquired as evidenced by adoption of vegetarianism by the Brahmins. It was a means adopted by the Brahmins to regain their lost position.[54]

The pollution by the touch of the Chandala was observed by the Brahmin only and the pollution was probably observed on ceremonial occasions only. If these conclusions were right, then this was a case of impurity as distinguished from untouchability. The untouchable polluted all, while the impure polluted only the Brahmin. The touch of the impure caused pollution only on a ceremonial occasion. The touch of the untouchable caused pollution at all times. According to Ambedkar, it was beef-eating which was the root of untouchability and which divided the impure and the untouchables. Therefore, the conclusion that untouchability was not the same as impurity had an important bearing on the determination of the date of birth of untouchability.[55] Ambedkar said that in Vedic times there was no untouchability. In the period of the Dharmasutras, there was impurity, but no untouchability.

In the period of Manu Smriti, there were four varnas; there was no fifth varna. Manu made no specific mention of the class involved in the controversy. Ambedkar remarked that there was no untouchability in the time of Manu; there was only impurity. The Narada Smriti spoke of the slaves as the fifth class. It spoke of the occupational theory of untouchability. Ambedkar said, "If the expression of the fifth class in the Narada Smriti referred to slaves, I see no reason why the expression fifth class in Manu

[53] Bhandarkar, D. R., *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, pp. 78-79.

[54] Ambedkar, *Untouchables: Who Are They?*, p. 121.

[55] Ibid., p. 142.

Smriti should not be taken to have reference to slaves. If this reasoning is correct, it cuts the very foot of the contention that untouchability existed in the time of Manu. Manu Smriti did not enjoin untouchability."[56]

Ambedkar tried to fix the time of Manu Smriti. According to Bühler, it is 2nd century A.D. Daphtary gave it as after 185 B.C. and not before. The interconnection between Pushya Mitra and the thesis propounded by Manu showed that the Manu Smriti came into being some time after 185 B.C., a date not far removed from the date assigned by Prof Bühler. Ambedkar remarked that in the 2nd century A.D., there was no untouchability.[57]

According to Ambedkar, the conditions described by Fa-Hian, the famous Chinese traveller in A.D. 400, though bordering on untouchability might not be taken as amounting to untouchability. Fa-Hian came during the reign of the Gupta kings. The Gupta kings were patrons of Brahminism. It was quite possible that what Fa-Hian described was not untouchability, but an extremity to which the Brahmins were prepared to carry the ceremonial impurity which had become attached to some community, particularly to Chandalas. There is a mention of Chandala in Fa-Hian. There is also a description of Chandala in Bana's *Kadambari*. Far from being degraded, the Chandalas of Bana's period had ruling families among them, for Bana spoke of the Chandala girl as a Chandala princess. Bana's period was ascribed as A.D. 600. By that time, the Chandalas had not come to be regarded as untouchables. Fa-Hian's description referred to Chandalas only, while the description given by Yuan Chwang applied to communities other than Chandalas. It was just possible that when Yuan Chwang came to India, untouchability had emerged. While untouchability did not exist in A.D. 200, it had emerged by A.D. 600. Cow-killing was made a capital offence by the Gupta kings, some time in the 4th century A.D. Therefore he concluded that untouchability must have arisen about A.D. 400. It is born out of the struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism.[58]

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56. Ibid., p. 146.
57. Ibid., p. 147.
58. Ibid., p. 155.

SECTION 3 — CASTE SYSTEM

Ambedkar in his writings and speeches had dealt exhaustively and pointedly with the evils of caste system.

The first writing of Ambedkar on caste system could be seen in a paper read before the Anthropology Seminar (9 May 1910) of Dr A. A. Oldenweiser, Columbia University, New York. He first gave definitions of castes as given by Senart, Nesfield, Risley and S. V. Ketkar. Ketkar remarked, "As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders; and if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem."[59] Here Ketkar gave two characteristics of the caste system : Firstly its membership was confined to those who were born in it, and secondly its members were forbidden to marry outside.

The idea of pollution was a characteristic of caste only in so far as caste had a religious flavour. Absence of eating with outsiders was not due to positive prohibition but it was a natural result of caste, i.e. exclusiveness. The various races of India occupying definite territories had more or less fused into one another and did possess a cultural unity, which was the only criterion of a homogeneous population. This cultural unity reflected in what we call endogamy which was the only characteristic that was peculiar to caste. Therefore, the problem of caste then ultimately resolved itself into one of repairing the disparity between the marriageable units of the two sexes within it. Ambedkar remarked,

> "I am justified in holding it, whether regarded as end or means, sati, enforced widowhood, and girl marriage are customs that were primarily intended to solve the problem of the surplus men and surplus women in a caste and to maintain the endogamy. The origin of caste means the origin of the mechanism for endogamy."[60]

He showed that the caste system was a legal system maintained at the point of a bayonet. If it had survived it was due to pre-

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59. Ketkar, Dr S. V., *The History of Caste in India,* p. 4.
60. Ambedkar's paper *Caste in India.*

vention of the masses from the possession of arms, denying to the masses the right of education, and depriving the masses of the right to property. Therefore he maintained that the caste system far from natural was really an imposition by the ruling classes upon the servile classes.

The study of the caste problem by Ambedkar involved four main points: That in spite of the composite make-up of the Hindu population there was a deep cultural unity; that caste was a parcelling into bits of a larger cultural unit; that there was one caste to start with; and that classes had become castes through initiation and excommunication.[61]

The major theoretical exposition of caste system by Ambedkat was his presidential speech supposd to be delivered at the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal, Lahore, at the end of March 1936. The conference was postponed up to the middle of May due to very bitter criticism for having elected its president a leader like Ambedkar "who was a declared hater of Hindu religion". The result was that even the staunch leaders like Bhai Paramanand, Dr Narang, Mahatma Hans Raj, Narendra Nath had to dissociate themselves from the mandal.

Ambedkar participated in the Sikh Conference in Amritsar on 13 and 14 April 1936. His participation in the Sikh Conference worsened the suspicion of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal. He had plainly said in the proposed address that it was the last speech he was going to deliver as a Hindu. The mandal refused to accept him as their president for the conference. He did not consent to change his speech. This was the first time when the appointment of a president was cancelled by a reception committee because it did not approve of the views of the president. Commenting on this Gandhiji wrote: "The reception committee appears to have deprived the public of an opportunity of listening to the original views of a man who has carved out for himself a unique position. Whatever label he wears in future, Dr Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten."[62]

In this connection Ambedkar quoted Ramdas, the great poet-saint of Maharashtra in the 17th century. In his *Das-Bodh*, a

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61. Ibid.

62. Gandhi in *Harijan*, 11 July 1936.

socio-politico-religious treatise in Marathi verse, Ramdas asked addressing Hindus, "Can we expect our antyaja to be our guru because he is a pandit (i.e. learned)?" and gave an answer in the negative.[63] Even under the Peshwa rule (1713-1818) pollution by the superstition of touch or shadow prevailed.

According to Ambedkar, "Caste system is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers. It is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other." This division of labour was not spontaneous; it was not based on natural aptitudes nor on choice. Individual sentiment had no place in it. It was based on the dogma of predestination. But the "caste system involves an attempt to appoint tasks to individuals in advance, selected not on the basis of trained original capacities, but on that of the social status of the parents".[64] There was no readjustment of occupations, and therefore caste became a direct cause of much of the unemployment. Ambedkar remarked that as an economic organisation caste was, therefore, a harmful institution, in as much as it involved the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies of social rules. He further said that caste did not result in economic efficiency. It had not improved the race. It had completely disorganised and demoralised the Hindus.[65]

It was contended that the object of the caste was to preserve purity of race and purity of blood. But Ambedkar said that there was a mixture of all races in all parts of the world. According to him, the caste system could not be said to have grown as means of preventing the admixture of races or as a means of maintaining purity of blood.[66] The caste system did not demarcate racial division. To the question, whether the caste system embodied the eugenics of modern scientists, Ambedkar answered in the negative, and remarked that it embodied the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of Hindus who were superior enough in social status to set a fashion and who had authority to force it on their inferiors.[67]

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63. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 2.
64. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
65. Ibid., p. 23.
66. Ibid., p. 25.
67. Ibid.

According to Ambedkar, there was no Hindu consciousness. In every Hindu, the consciousness that exists was the consciousness of the caste. He remarked that the word "Hindu" did not appear in Sanskrit work prior to the Mohammedan invasion. Hindu society was a collection of castes. They did not even form a federation. Men did not become a society by living in physical proximity. Similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts was not enough to constitute men into society. Men constituted a society because they had things which they possessed in common. It continued to exist by communication. He emphasised:

> "The caste system prevents common activity and by preventing it, it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being. There is only individual share or part in the associated activity."[68]

Ambedkar thought that an antisocial spirit was the worst feature of the caste system. There was feud between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Hindus, therefore, were not only an assortment of castes, but they were so many warring groups each living for itself and for its selfish ideals. He further remarked that the existence of caste and caste-consciousness had served to keep the memory of past feuds and had prevented solidarity. He remarked that the present-day non-Brahmins could not forgive the present-day Brahmins for the insult their ancestors gave to Shivaji ![69]

According to Ambedkar, castes are autonomous and there was no authority anywhere to compel a caste to admit a new-comer to its social life. Hindu society being a conglomeration of castes and each caste being a close corporation there was no place for a convert. Hindu religion ceased to be a missionary religion when the caste system grew up among the Hindus. Caste was inconsistent with conversion. He concluded, "So long as castes remain, Hindu religion cannot be made a missionary religion and shuddhi (purificatory conversion) will be both a folly and futility."[70] Brotherly feelings are seen amongst Sikhs as also

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68. Ibid., p. 28.
69. Ibid., p. 29.
70. Ibid., p. 30.

amongst Mohammedans. Hindus could derive no such strength. They could not feel assured that their fellow religionists would come to their help. There was no social cement among Hindus. He maintained that so long as caste remained there would be no sanghatan, and so long as there was no sanghatan, the Hindus would remain weak and meek. He added, "Caste has made sanghatan and cooperation even for a good cause impossible."[71]

There was the right of excommunication. It meant death. Ambedkar asked : "Why this should not be made an offence punishable by law?" He replied that there was autonomy in the caste. Therefore the caste in the hands of the orthodox had been a powerful weapon for persecuting the reformers. There was charity, but it began with caste and ended with caste. He maintained that caste had destroyed the sense of public charity. Virtue had become caste-ridden, and morality had become caste-bound. Critics asked: "If you do not want caste, what is your ideal society?" Ambedkar said, "My ideal would be a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity." An ideal society must be mobile. There must be social endosmosis. This was fraternity which was only another name for democracy. Democracy was not merely a form of government. It was primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoining communicated experience. It was essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.[72]

The protagonists of chaturvarnya took great care to point out that their chaturvarnya was based not on birth but on worth—quality (guna). Ambedkar said, "I cannot reconcile myself to this ideal. Only new names are given, but the social content is the same." He added, "to allow this chaturvarnya based on worth to be designated by such stinking labels of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra indicative of social divisions based on birth is a snare". Chaturvarnya presupposed that you could classify people into four definite classes. It had a close affinity to the Platonic ideal. To Plato men fell by nature into three classes: producers (labourers, traders), defenders in war and guardians of internal peace and law-givers of the people. The chief

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71. Ibid., p. 36.
72. Ibid., p. 39.

criticism against Plato made by Ambedkar was that his idea of dumping of individuals into a few sharply divided classes was a very superficial view of man and his powers. According to him, varna and caste were fundamentally opposed. The former was based on worth and the other was based on birth. If the system of chaturvarnya was to be established, the system of caste must be abolished. The system of social organisation, chaturvarnya, was impracticable, harmful and has turned out to be a miserable failure. He remarked, "Chaturvarnya must fail for the very reason for which Plato's Republic must fail", and said, "To me this chaturvarnya with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it."[73] Even if the system of chaturvarnya was practicable, it was a vicious system, he added.

Ambedkar raised another important question : Why were there no social revolutions in India? He answered, "The lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched system of chaturvarnya."[74] He further said that the lower classes were condemned to be lowly and not knowing the way of escape and not having the means of escape they became reconciled to eternal servitude which they accepted as their inescapable fate. The weak in Europe has had in his freedom of military service his physical weapon, in suffrage his political weapon and in education his moral weapon. All the three weapons were denied to the masses in India by chaturvarnya. He concluded : "There cannot be a more degrading system of social organisation than chaturvarnya. It is the system which deadens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity."[75]

According to Ambedkar, the Maurya period was a period when chaturvarnya was completely annihilated. The Shudras became the rulers of the country. The period of defeat and darkness was the period when chaturvarnya flourished. He called Maurya period in history as a period of freedom, greatness and glory. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were eyesores to each other. The Kshatriyas became tyrannical and the masses were disarmed. The

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[73] Ibid., p. 42.
[74] Ibid., p. 49.
[75] Ibid.

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Mahabharata and Puranas were full of the incidents of the strife between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The avatar (incarnation) was for one sacred purpose and that was to annihilate the Kshatriyas. The rivalry and enmity between different varnas were prevailing in society. There was no harmony. Ambedkar concluded that chaturvarnya cannot be an ideal.[76]

Caste among non-Hindus was fundamentally different from caste among Hindus. Caste had not the same social significance for non-Hindus as it had for Hindus. Caste was very essential in the case of Hindus. Without knowing it you do not feel sure what sort of a being he is. Another thing was the excommunication. It is foreign to the Sikhs and Mohammedans. The non-Hindus did not regard the caste as a religious dogma. Religion compelled Hindus to treat isolation and segregation of castes as a virtue. Ambedkar concluded, "There is no integrating force among the Hindus to counteract the disintegration caused by caste."[77]

It was always said that Hindus had survived for centuries. According to Ambedkar, the fact of survival was no proof of fitness to survive. Hindu society survived not because of caste, but because the foreigner who conquered the Hindus did not find it necessary to kill them wholesale. The history of Hindus was the history of the surrender of India before foreign invaders. The Hindus have not only never withstood the onslaught of the foreign invader, they have never even shown the capacity to organise a rebellion to throw off the foreign yoke. On the other hand, the Hindus have tried to make slavery comfortable. In fact, under the caste system the general mobilisation of the people for defence was impossible since mobilisation required general liquidation of the occupational theory underlying the caste system.[78] Ambedkar asked : Why elevate the hereditary system into an official doctrine? What matters to society was not the label by which the individual class was known but the service it offered. According to him, the intercaste dinners were an inadequate remedy. He maintained that interdining had not succeeded in killing the spirit of caste and the consciousness of castes. He concluded : "The real remedy is intermarriage. It will vanish the spirit created by caste."[79]

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[76] Ibid., p. 50-51.

[77] Ibid., p. 53.

[78] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 287.

Ambedkar regarded notional and psychological change an urgent necessity. To him the real remedy was "to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the Shastras," for "the acts of the people are merely the results of their beliefs, inculcated upon their minds by the Shastras".[80] He emphasised that men must be free from the deeprooted religious prejudices or sacred notions behind castes. Divinity behind the castes, i.e. behind the Shastras, should be destroyed.[81] According to him, caste divided men into separate communities and these communities were in a graded order, one above the other, in the social status. He maintained that this sealing of castes made it impossible to organise a common front against the caste system. Castes formed a graded system of sovereignties, high and low, which were jealous of their status and which knew that if a general dissolution came some of them stood to lose more of their prestige and power than others. There would not be a general mobilisation of the Hindus for an attack on the caste system.

In Hindu religion, there was the authority of Vedas and Smritis, but Ambedkar said that no attempt was made to find out which of the two accorded with reason. Similarly no occasion was left to a Hindu to examine in a rational way the foundations of his belief in caste and varna, and "rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and Smritis is absolutely condemned".[82]

If anybody broke the rules of castes, he is allowed to express regrets and do some penance and thereby his way is cleared and his position is maintained in society. Ambedkar remarked, "By this theory (prayashchitta), the Shastras by following a spirit of compromise have given caste a perpetual lease of life and have smothered reflective thought which would have otherwise led to the destruction of the notion of caste."[83]

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79. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste,* p. 57.
80. Ibid., p. 58.
81. Ibid., pp. 61-70.
82. Ibid., p. 67.
83. Ibid., pp. 69-71.

In reply to the presidential address of Dr Ambedkar, Gandhiji wrote three articles in his *Harijan*. He remarked: "Dr Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism." He said further:

> "Religion does not live by learning. It lives in the experiences of saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. Caste has nothing to do with religion. Varna and ashrams are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of varna defines not our right, but our duties... There is nothing in the law of varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. Ambedkar's profound mistake lies in his picking out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value, and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misinterpreted. In his able address, the Doctor has overproved his case. A religion is to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced."[84]

Ambedkar first remarked that the masses did not know the contents of the Shastras. He said that they believed in what they have been told that the Shastras enjoined and observed caste and untouchability as a religious duty.

Gandhiji said that these Shastras should be interpreted not by the learned scholars but by the saints. Ambedkar objected to it by saying that none of the saints ever attacked the caste system; on the contrary they were staunch believers in the caste system. Ambedkar said that Dnyanadeo moved heaven and earth to get his status as a Brahmin recognised by the Brahmin fraternity of Paithan. Ekanath was not opposed to caste and untouchability; he felt that the pollution caused by the touch of an untouchable could be washed away by a bath in the sacred waters of the river Godavari. Ambedkar remarked that the saints have never carried on a campaign against caste and untouchability. They were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. They were concerned with relation between man and god. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of god—a very different and innocuous proposition which nobody could find difficult to preach or dangerous to believe in. That the masses

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84. Gandhi in *Harijan*, 18 July 1936.

have remained staunch believers in caste and untouchability shows that the pious lives and noble sermons of the saints have had no effect on their life and conduct as against the teaching of Shastras.[85]

As regards Gandhiji's remark that a religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens, but by the best it might have produced, Ambedkar asked : Why the worst number so many and the best so few? According to him, there were two possibilities : either the worst incapable of making the remotest approach to the religious ideal, or that the religious ideal was a wholly wrong ideal which had given a wrong moral twist to the lives of the many, and the best had become best in spite of the wrong ideal—in fact by giving to the wrong twist a turn in the right direction. He did not accept the first, but accepted the second.

Ambedkar thought that Gandhiji's ideal of following one's ancestral calling was not only an impossible and impractical ideal but it was also morally an indefensible ideal. Gandhiji saw great virtue in a Brahmin remaining a Brahmin all his life. He was satisfied that there were "real Brahmins who are living on alms freely given to them and are giving freely what they have of spiritual treasures". Ambedkar said that this "spiritual treasure" was not a conservation of virtue but it was the prostitution of a noble profession which was no other than the service of religion.

According to Ambedkar, varna and caste were evil ideas and it mattered very little whether one believed in varna or in caste. Varna was infallible like Vedas. The Bhagavadgita has done enough mischief by giving a fresh lease of life to the varna system, by basing it upon a new and plausible foundation, namely that of innate qualities. Moreover the varna system of Bhagavadgita did not say that it was based on birth. He said further, "With Mr Gandhi varna is determined by birth and the profession of a varna is determined by the principle of heredity so that varna is merely another name for caste."[86]

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85. Ambedkar, *A Reply to Mahatma*, p. 14.
86. Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 290.

SECTION 4 — BRAHMINISM AND NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT

In his analysis of social problems, Ambedkar characterised the caste system as irrational and tyrannical; but above all he attacked Brahminism. He enumerated the principles of Brahminism as follows : graded inequality between the different classes; complete disarmament of the Shudras and the untouchables; complete prohibition of the education of the Shudras and the untouchables; ban on the Shudras and the untouchables occupying places of power and authority; ban on the Shudras and the untouchables acquiring property; and complete subjugation and suppression of women.

Inequality, according to him, was the official doctrine of Brahminism, and the suppression of the lower classes aspiring to equality was carried out without remorse by the Brahmins as their bounden duty. Brahmins made education their monopoly and declared acquisition of education by the lower classes a crime. The disarmament of the Shudras and the untouchables was the rule of law promulgated by the Brahmins. People were emasculated because of the Brahminic policy of wholesale disarmament. No intellectual class has prostituted its intelligence to invent a philosophy to keep his uneducated countrymen in a perpetual state of ignorance and poverty as the Brahmins have done in India.[87]

According to Ambedkar, the Brahmin was alien and hostile to Shudras and untouchables. The Bania was the worst parasitic class known to history. In him, the vice of money-making was unredeemed by culture or conscience. He was like an undertaker who prospered when there was an epidemic. He used his money to create poverty and more poverty by lending money for unproductive purposes. The whole of poor, starving, illiterate India was mortgaged to the Bania. The Brahmin enslaved the mind, and the Bania enslaved the body; between them they divided the spoils which belonged to the governing classes.[88]

According to Ambedkar, the Brahmins were the leaders of society and scholarship was confined to them. A Brahmin scho-

87. Ibid., p. 215.
88. Ibid., p. 217.

lar was learned, but not an intellectual. He was conscious and alive to the interests of his class. Though Brahmins were learned, they produced no Voltaire. They had selfish interests and were intolerant. He remarked that Brahminism being the creation of their forefathers, the Brahmins were interested in defending the sacred Vedas by suppressing the truth, and by defending them, they defended their rights and authority. He maintained that because of these things the Brahmins were unable to carry on independently the research of the sacred books.[89]

Ambedkar criticised the Nehru Report (1928) as perpetuating the upper-class hegemony and Brahminical rule in society, through the amalgamation of political and religious powers in the hands of Brahmins. This supremacy would be challenged if reserved seats were given to the untouchables and backward Hindus. He thought that the Brahmins and the upper-class Hindus who formed the majority in Nehru Committee had used their influence to deprive the lower classes of political rights and to consolidate the position of Brahmins. According to him, the constituencies suggested by the Nehru Committee were more for consolidating Brahminical power than for political purposes.[90]

Ambedkar said that Hindu scriptures were almost entirely the creation of the Brahmins, whose sole object was to sustain their superiority and privileges. According to him, Brahmin scholars sought to defend them even at the cost of truth, and did nothing which could undermine their authority. The Brahmin scholars had done little original work unless it was a matter of fixing dates or tracing geneologies. He held that there had been a non-Brahmin movement in this country which was a political movement of the Shudras.[91]

Ambedkar expressed his firm opinion that the Shastras must be proscribed.[92] He further said that the Shastras were an insult to the people. At least those who repeated them should not meddle with the social questions when they were on the point of being settled. As regards the Puranas and Shastras, he deemed them a treasure-trove of sharp practices which the Brahmins employed to befool, beguile and swindle the common mass of poor, illiterate and superstitious Hindus.[93]

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[89] Ambedkar, *Who Were Shudras?*, Preface.

[90] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 202.

[91] Mahabharata, Shantiparva, Adhyaya-IX, Paijavan is described as a Shudra.

[92] Speech by Ambedkar in Bombay Provincial Depressed Class Conference, 10-11 April 1925.

Ambedkar held that Brahminism and democracy were opposed to each other. If democracy is needed, then chaturvarnya must be ended. He said :

> "The root of the untouchability is the caste system; the root of the caste system is religion attached to varna and ashram; and the root of varnashram is Brahminical religion; and the root of the Brahminical religion is authoritarianism or political power."[94]

For true religion Ambedkar made the following suggestions :

(1) There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu religion acceptable to all Hindus. Preaching of any doctrines, religious or social, contained in Vedas, Shastras or Puranas should be penalised.

(2) The priesthood should be abolished. It must at least cease to be hereditary. There must be a state examination for priesthood.

(3) It should be made penal for a person who has no sanad to officiate as a priest.

(4) A priest should be the servant of state like any civil servant and should be paid by the state and should be subject to the disciplinary action by the state in the matter of his morals, beliefs and worship, in addition to his being subject along with other citizens to the ordinary law of the land.

(5) The number of the priests should be limited by law according to the requirements of the state like civil service. He thought that the priestly class in Hindus is subject neither to law nor to morality. This class must be brought under legislation. It would democratise it by throwing it open to everyone. It would certainly help to kill Brahminism, and would also help

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93. Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 30.

94. Speech by Ambedkar in D.C. Conference, 1944 (Ambedkar Jayanti Number).

to kill caste which is nothing but Brahminism incarnate. He remarked :

> "Brahminism is the poison which has spoiled Hinduism. You will succeed in saving Hinduism if you kill Brahminism. Aryasamajists must welcome this because this is merely an application of their own doctrine of Guna-Karma."

He further said that there must be a doctrinal basis to Hindu religion. That basis must be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short with democracy.[95]

Ambedkar regarded three great men as his preceptors. The first was Kabir, the second was Phooley and the third was Buddha. Kabir took him to bhakti cult; Phooley inspired him to strive for anti-Brahminism and amelioration of the masses, their education and economic uplift; and Buddha gave him the mental and metaphysical satisfaction and a social way leading to the emancipation of the untouchables by resorting to the way of mass conversion.

Phooley was the 19th century social reformer in Maharashtra. He was the first man in Poona who first openly made water-arrangements to the untouchables in Poona and opened schools for untouchables (in 1851) and for women (in 1848). Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur called Phooley as the Martin Luther of Maharashtra. Phooley opposed tooth and nail the oppression by Brahmins. He was not the hater of Brahmins; but the movement led by him smelt of anti-Brahminism. Men like Justice M. G. Ranade helped him in his cause of social reform. Phooley wanted independence to set the masses free from priestly slavery.

On 23 September 1873, Phooley founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of the Seekers of Truth). It preached three principles : the god almighty is one and all the beings are his children; there is no necessity of any middleman between man and god; and the greatness should not depend on birth, i.e. in what caste he is born. The preaching of these teachings and the establishment of the above Samaj gave him unprecedented eminence in society. Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda gave assistance for his cause, and called him Booker T. Washington of India. When Tilak and Agarkar were released from the Dongri Jail in 1881, Phooley along with his followers received them courteously and courageously and led them in Poona city in procession. Ambedkar dedicated his book *Who Were Shudras?* to Jyotiba Phooley.

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[95] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 77.

Ambedkar was attracted towards the teaching of Phooley because of his decisive attitude towards the emancipation of the downtrodden masses. Usury and absentee landlordism were attacked by Phooley. He did not call him a peasant who did not till his land. The anticlericalism or anti-Brahminism taught by Phooley was interpreted by the interested leaders of the movement as the plank from which the anti-Brahmin movement sprang; and they led the whole movement into the channels of the non-Brahmin party. The non-Brahmin leaders regarded the Brahmins as the enemies of the nation. Javalkar published a pamphlet named "Enemies of the Nation" in Marathi which stirred the whole of Maharashtra. Ambedkar remarked that it was "a good book written in bad taste".[96] A suit was filed against the non-Brahmin leaders—Jedhe, Javalkar and Bagade. Ambedkar as a lawyer defended the accused and they were set free.

The non-Brahmin movement flourished during the second and third decades of this century. Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur was an active supporter of this movement. Its prominent leader, B. V. Jadhav, was returned to the Bombay Legislative Council and became a minister in the new legislature under the Montford reforms. By his high position, the non-Brahmin movement became consolidated.

Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur saw in Ambedkar a promising youth capable of leading the non-Brahmin movement. In a letter to Ambedkar, he wrote :

> "Consult Messrs Little and Co on two points. Firstly, the point that the Mahars were called criminal tribe by Tilak. Can they proceed against him civilly? And secondly, that the public funds are alleged to be misappropriated by him

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[96] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 193.

> or his party. Long accounts appeared in the *Sandesh* (a Marathi daily in Bombay) about them. From those accounts are the persons concerned liable to be proceeded with criminally and civilly or both?"[97]

In another letter Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur addressed Ambedkar as "Lokamanya" Ambedkar. (In India Tilak was the only nationalist leader who was spontaneously addressed by his countrymen as Lokamanya.) In that letter he asked Ambedkar to come to Kolhapur and assist him in his new arrangement of abolishing baluta system and restore "spirit" and "selfrespect" among untouchables by consolidation of holdings. In another letter to Sir Alfred Peas, Shahu Maharaja wrote :

> "He (Ambedkar) will explain to you the difference between backward classes and Brahmin bureaucracy. . . the real object of the Brahmins has been to regain and establish their long lost power. The present scheme of selfgovernment for India will not make the people free and equal, but will only make the Brahmins powerful. A Brahmin oligarchy possessed of political power will be a menace to the empire and a drag on the onward march of the Indian people. The non-Brahmins have failed to get a hearing from the several administrations in India but they hope to find sympathy at the hands of the British public. May I, therefore, request you to give Dr Ambedkar a patient hearing and such help as you can conveniently render. . ."[98]

The letters of the Maharaja of Kolhapur made no effect on Ambedkar. To the first letter Ambedkar replied that it would be of no use and would only create difficulty. And he could not see Sir Alfred Peas referred to in the other letter. The movement became widespread. It demanded the "protection and guidance of the British government" until the ineffectiveness of the evil of the caste system became manifest. This repudiation of the nationalist movement and the leading of the non-Brahmin movement into antinationalist channels were serious blows to the growing nationalist and anti-imperialist movement of Indian people. Shahu Maharaja of

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97. Bombay University Ambedkar Collections.
98. Ibid.

Kolhapur died on 5 May 1922 in Bombay and the non-Brahmin movement receded into background.

Ambedkar was accorded a hearty reception in January 1943 in Bombay. Among other things he said that the non-Brahmin party was powerful in Bombay and Madras, but it could not lead the masses to its destination. He analysed the causes of the failure of the movement. He said that the first cause was that the non-Brahmin parties prostituted their positions of power for providing jobs for their men and nothing more. They had no broad policy and broad measures. The non-Brahmin parties forgot the class from which they came and became as insolent and arrogant as any foreigner. In September 1944 in a lecture in Madras he said : "Many of the non-Brahmin partymen tried to become second-class Brahmins, they have not abandoned Brahminism. They are holding it as an ideal."[99] He stressed the need for good leaders, good organisation and clear-cut ideology for the non-Brahmin party.

This movement was the response of a downtrodden section of Hindu society to the challenge of caste in the new context of British rule and western liberal-rationalist ideology. The more moderate non-Brahmins entered the Congress, and soon dominated it. Phooley's ideas did not make progress among non-Brahmins for several years after he had propounded them, but caste-consciousness seemed to have suddenly become sharp in 1916 when Montagu arrived in India to consult the people and the government of India about the future form of government.[100] The non-Brahmin movement and the depression of the thirties led to the migration of Brahmins from rural areas to big towns. The more prosperous and educated non-Brahmin castes began Sanskritising their way of life, and the Brahmins started becoming westernised. As a result of this movement, the members of the non-Brahmin castes obtained privileges and concessions while at the same time discriminatory practices were built into the administration of many states, and the main beneficiaries of the movement had been the landowning dominant castes.[101]

[99] Keer, op. cit., pp. 341-50.
[100] Shriniwas, *Castes in Modern India and Other Essays*, pp. 20-23.
[101] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 193.

Though Ambedkar tried to further the non-Brahmin movement, he was not blind to the virtues of Brahmins. He said :

> "You people always abuse Brahmins; but you never imitate their virtues. Brahmins change their ideas according to the exigencies of the times. They pursue knowledge and money . . . Remember ! Brahmins have brains within brains. If you want to fight the Brahmins, you must be more intelligent than them. You do not unite; instead you fight amongst yourselves and chew the poisonous pill given by the Brahmins—that 'Mahars are inferior to Marathas'."[102]

At the time of the Mahad satyagraha (1927) for drinking water of a tank, non-Brahmin leaders (Jedhe and others) urged Ambedkar to exclude Brahmins from the satyagraha but he overruled the suggestion and remarked that it was erroneous to treat all Brahmins as enemies of untouchables. What he hated was the men who were possessed with the spirit of Brahminism—the idea of high caste and low caste—which implanted the idea of pollution from human beings and imparted social privileges and inequality.[103]

According to Ambedkar, the non-Brahmin leaders had no loyalties to the cause; they forgot to bring the non-Brahmin castes on equal footing—a goal cherished by Phooley. Marathas began to preach their superiority and the distinction between Marathas and non-Marathas became clear in all the party programmes. Even in the educational conference of the non-Brahmins, the untouchables were seated away from others for fear of being polluted. Even the non-Brahmin leaders like B. V. Jadhav asked Marathas to vote for Marathas in general elections. The untouchable community had no place in that movement. That was why the untouchables, though attracted towards the non-Brahmin movement, could not become one with it.[104]

The non-Brahmin members in Bombay Legislative Council (1927) opposed the bill for the removal of untouchability. The upper-class Marathas could not take the position of treating untouchables with equality. The upper-class Marathas did not support Ambedkar in Mahad satyagraha.

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Keer, op. cit., p. 85.

[104] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 14-20.

Ambedkar was bitter towards the Marathas, because he regarded that they were not progressive as they opposed the Mahar Watan Bill.[105] They were politically the most backward community. He remarked: "There is no man of eminence among them (Marathas) such as Tilak, Gokhale or Ranade."[106]

In a message given to the *Satyashodhak* magazine on the 16th Satyashodhak Social Conference, Ambedkar said, "The non-Brahmins have effaced the memory of Jyotiba Phooley completely. Not only that, but that class has shamelessly betrayed his philosophy."[107]

Anti-Brahminism became a progressive force so far as it tried to boost up the untouchables in general and Ambedkar in particular. But the leaders of non-Brahmin movement used the movement for their sectarian motives and they excluded untouchables from the orbit of the movement.

Though Ambedkar was inspired by the teachings of Phooley, still he was disillusioned by the professions of his socalled disciples who led the non-Brahmin movement in the communal and antisocial channels.

SECTION 5—HINDU CODE

In India there is a uniform code of laws covering almost every aspect of human relationship. In this context, Ambedkar said in the Constituent Assembly,

> "We have a uniform criminal code, law of the transfer of property, Negotiable Instruments Act. This would prove that this country has practically a civil code, uniform in its content, and applicable to the whole of the country. The only province the civil law has not been able to invade so far is marriage and succession."[108]

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[105] Ibid., pp. 227-28.

[106] Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 28.

[107] *Satyashodhak*, December 1950 Number.

[108] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, pp. 550-51.

He challenged the statement that Muslim personal law was immutable and uniform throughout the whole of India. He showed that Shariat law was not applicable to the North-West Frontier Province up to 1935. It followed Hindu law in succession. In 1939 Shariat law was applied to it by central legislature. The legislature had to intervene in 1937 and to pass an enactment applying the Shariat law to the rest of India. In North Malabar, Muslims followed the matriarchal law. Ambedkar remarked, "...it would not be open to any Muslim to say that the framers of the civil code had done great violence to the sentiments of the Muslim community. The fear is nullified."[109]

The Hindu Code introduced only four new things in the present law. They were: abolition of the doctrine of the rights by birth; absolute right over property to women; share to daughter; and provisions for divorce. These provisions were new as far as the present Hindu law was concerned. But there was nothing either antisocial or antireligious in them.[110]

There was chaos in the law of adoption. There was no one system of Hindu law for the whole of India. Law of marriage was not uniform. Hindu law was not uniform for all Hindus and was not a system of law—such was the criticism often made by the critics of Hindu law.

It may be asked at this stage as to what may be done to remove these anomalies, uncertainties and vagaries of law as were obtained in the Hindu law. The solution attempted up to now was the intervention of the legislature. Under these circumstances codification was the only solution. The great jurists favoured codification. Dr P. V. Kane was also of the opinion that Hindu law must be codified. The codification of Hindu law was not merely a desideratum, but a necessity. The code aimed at consolidating Hindu society, and it would be applicable to all Hindus.[111]

The codification fufilled the unambiguous pledge given by the Constitution of India that there would be no discrimination between citizens of India on the grounds of sex or caste. Untouchability has been abolished by the constitution. All these pledges were sought to be fulfilled by the provisions of the code. Ambedkar contended that the enactment of the present code was a natural consequence of the adoption of the Constitution of India.

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Tope and Ursekar, *Hindu Code*, Preface by Kokje Shastri.

[111] Ibid., p. 25.

The Hindu Code was consistent with the Smritis. It could be seen from the different Smritis that there was a periodic revision of Hindu law. It could be safely asserted that the present Hindu law was not divine.

Another important thing was that the Hindu Code was consistent with our constitution. Article 15 states: "The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of place of birth." It was the present system of Hindu law that was inconsistent with the provisions of the fundamental rights in our constitution and the code aimed at making it consistent with the constitution. The modern world is tending towards codification. Article 13 of the UN Charter lays down: "Encouraging and progressive development of the international law and its codification".

In 1941 the government of India appointed a Hindu Law Committee with Sir B. N. Rau as chairman. The Rau Committee recommended the codification of Hindu law in gradual stages. Its draft bill was introduced in the central legislature in 1943 and 1947, but it met with fierce opposition from orthodox Hindus.

The codification of Hindu law was a continuation of the work of framing our constitution. As such, Ambedkar, the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India, took keen interest in the deliberations of this proposed codification. He and 16 others were members of the Select Committee. The report of the Select Committee, to amend and codify certain branches of the Hindu law, was presented to the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislature) on 12 August 1948. The report contained nine parts: Preliminary, Marriage and Divorce, Adoption, Minority and Guardianship, Joint Family Property, Women's Property, Succession, Maintenance and Miscellaneous.

A government bill in exactly the same terms as the Draft Hindu Code prepared by the Hindu Law Committee was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 11 April 1947. A motion for the continuance of the bill had also been adopted by this house on 17 November 1947.[112] Ambedkar remarked:

> "I am an orthodox, but the right to divorce must be given to women. But that right must not be used for bad purposes. Therefore there are suggested curtailments in that right."

This statement was selfexplanatory. And to curb the misuse of this right he included in that bill the provision that the application for divorce should be before a district judge. He complained: "None of the prominent Hindu women leaders were really interested in the social progress of our women." He drafted the bill in conformity with the dictates of Smritis which allowed several rights to men. He said: "The bill was only aimed at removing the obstruction of law in the social advancement of women." But in the end he remarked: "The Hindu Code Bill was now just like milk spoiled by mixture with a bitter acid."[113]

The Hindu Code Bill was opposed by orthodox sections. The ruling party circles were divided and the fate of the bill hung in the balance. The Congress Party did not support the Hindu Code Bill. The Prime Minister permitted the Congress members to vote openly on the bill. The dropping of the Hindu Code Bill was the occasion for Ambedkar's resignation from the cabinet.

SECTION 6—SOCIAL ATTITUDE AS SEEN IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Ambedkar by his precept and practice made efforts for a balance between thought and action, and he endeavoured to maintain it earnestly. His principle of dynamism recognised that "there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing sanatan; that everything is changing, that change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society".[114] He thought that things, includ-

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112. CA (Legislative) Debates (17 November 1947), p. 453.
113. *The Times of India*, 27 December 1952.
114. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 78.

ing even morality and religion, must be measured by their standards of survival value.

Ambedkar did not attribute the cause of present misery to past karma (deeds) of man, but he held that man in circumstances was wholly responsible for present poverty and suffering. The social environment was as much responsible for human sorrow as man himself. He remarked, "In an ideal society, there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be social endosmosis."[115]

Ambedkar emphasised social conscience: "Social conscience is the only safeguard of all rights, fundamental or nonfundamental."[116] This social conscience was a rebel against wrong deeds of any power on earth. His ideal was to strive for human harmony. What Ambedkar wanted was not the mere survival but a life of respect, justice and equality. To him, nothing was more disgraceful for a man than to live a life devoid of honour, self-respect, great cause, and love for man, society and his country.

It is the social stability on which depended political party and military power. Social stability depended upon the best social adjustment among the different social units. To Ambedkar, unless there was "fluidity" and "equity" among the classes, there could not be social progress and, therefore, no social stability. He remarked: "Stability is wanted but not at the cost of change when change is imperative. Adjustment is wanted but not at the sacrifice of social justice."[117] To him social stability depended upon the attitude of men who constituted society. The achievement of social stability meant negation of the caste system in Indian society. So long as there was caste system, the idea of social solidarity and unity was remote.

The Mahad tank satyagraha, burning of Manu Smriti, Kala Ram Mandir satyagraha for temple entry were some of the movements launched by Ambedkar. He clarified the motives behind the satyagrahas. He said:

> "It is not that you can solve all your problems by satyagraha. This is only a request to the upper-class Hindu mind. This

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115. Ibid., Appendix, p. 38.
116. Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 35.
117. Ibid., p. 21.

> satyagraha movement is going to prove whether Hindu mind treats human beings like human beings... This satyagraha is to change the hearts of Hindus. This movement will decide whether Hindu mind regards humanity in the new age."[118]

As regards the temple entry movement he remarked: "To accept temple entry and to be content with it is to temporise with evil and barter away the sacredness of human personality that dwells in them."[119] He regarded removal of untouchability more important than erection of temples.

As a president of the first session of the All-India Depressed Classes Association on 8 August 1930, Ambedkar expressed great concern at the probability of caste-ridden Hindu oligarchy being granted unrestricted power. He demanded adequate safeguards for the downtrodden untouchables in the constitution, and pleaded for direct representation in the councils commensurate with the strength of the depressed community. Concluding his speech he said that movement "will result in the emancipation of our people and the establishment of such a state of society in this country of ours in which one man will have one value, in all domains of life, political, social and economic".[120]

The Bombay government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Starte following a resolution by Dr P. G. Solanki, to inquire into the education, social and economic condition of the depressed classes and aboriginal tribes of the presidency, and to recommend measures for their uplift. A. V. Thakkar, Ambedkar and Solanki were on the committee. The Starte Committee submitted its report in March 1930. It recommended an increase in scholarships and hostels for the depressed class students attending secondary schools, provision of scholarships for industrial training of apprentices in mills and railway workshops, and a scholarship for studying abroad in engineering works, and the appointment of a special officer to look after these arrangements. It recommended that the depressed classes be recruited to police and military services. Ambedkar stressed the urgency of establishing a strong social centre conducting social and cultural activities of the depressed classes.

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[118] Kharat, S. R., *Muktisangram*, p. 25.

[119] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, pp. 108-12.

[120] Keer, op. cit., p. 143.

The Congress movement for the removal of untouchability was broadened after Gandhiji's fast which ended in the Poona Pact (1932). The names "untouchables" or "depressed classes" should be given up and the word "Harijan" to be used by all was suggested by the Congress, and it was brought into practice also. To give the word Harijan (men of god) statutory recognition, a bill was introduced in the Bombay Legislative Assembly (1938). Ambedkar remarked that the name Harijan has now become practically equivalent to the term asprishya (untouchable). He added that it was an attempt to give the untouchable a sweet name.[121] Referring to the Harijan Fund started by Gandhiji, he said that its object was to enslave the untouchables to the camp of caste Hindus.

The All-India Antiuntouchability League was Gandhiji's project. It was inspired by him and was the direct outcome of the Poona Pact.

Ambedkar suggested that there should be a majority of the untouchables on its different committees. He stressed the need for a special census and told Gandhiji that there was a visible slackness in the movement for the uplift of the depressed classes, and expressed his opinion that the activities of the Antiuntouchability League should be mainly directed to the economic, educational and social improvement of the depressed classes rather than to the problem of temple-entry and interdining. He urged the League to launch a campaign for civic rights. This would bring about a social revolution in Hindu society. He asked the Antiuntouchability League to fight for the removal of discrimination against the depressed classes and engage full-time workers.

This Depressed Classes League was renamed Harijan Sevak Sangh by Gandhiji. Ambedkar was on the central board, but he had not attended any of its meetings. He severed his connections with the League when it made a complete departure from its original aims. The exclusion of the depressed class leaders and workers from its executive gradually aroused suspicion of its bona fides in the minds of the depressed class leaders.

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[121] Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates, 1938, Vol. II, p. 512.

Many of them thought that the object of the League was, in effect, not the facilitation of Ambedkar's movement, but the liquidation of his leadership. Many of them were of the opinion that to Gandhiji removal of untouchability was a platform and not a programme.

This Harijan Sevak Sangh was humanitarian in its outlook. It relied much on the change of heart—the ideology of Gandhiji. The Sangh worked among Harijans as if it was a branch of the Congress. It never took a different and independent line of action. The workers of the Sangh were Congress workers. It did not bring forth new workers who would struggle for the uplift of untouchables. It did not build up the organisations of workers, peasants and landless labourers, and opposed political organisations of Ambedkar at every step.[122]

Ambedkar commented that the constructive work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh had the possibility of being converted into a plan to kill untouchables by kindness. The management of the Sangh has been allowed to pass entirely into the hands of the Hindus of the Congress. He charged that the policy of the Sangh was to exclude untouchables from the management and higher direction of the Sangh. To this Gandhiji replied:

> "The welfare work of the Sangh is a penance which the Hindus have to do for the sin of untouchability. Neither ethics nor right would justify untouchables in claiming a seat on the board of the Sangh."

But Ambedkar remarked that the Sangh was a political manufactory in addition to its being a service station for the untouchables. He said further that the Sangh was a political organisation, the aim of which was to draw the untouchables into the Congress fold. According to him, the resolution of Thakkar not to give scholarships to Mahar boys was nothing but a political manoeuvre by no less a person than the general secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh to punish the Mahars for their anti-Congress politics and make the untouchables the camp-followers of the Hindus and the Congress.[123]

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122. Kharat, *Muktisangram*, pp. 138-45.
123. Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, pp. 141-45.

The basis of Ambedkar's politics lay in the proposition that the untouchables were not a subsection of the Hindus, but a distinct element in the national life of India, as separate and distinct as the Muslims. Therefore he wanted separate political rights as against the Hindus. He said that a seat for the depressed classes in the Executive Council was a death-blow to Brahminism.

Ambedkar formed the Samata Sainik Dal (Social Equality Army). Its main function was to remove those practices of man, which were full of inequalities. The aim of this army was to dislodge all those values which conserved and fostered antihuman elements in the name of traditional and cultural heritage.[124] To the critics, this organisation was a waste of time and money on a useless issue. To him, there was no doubt that there was natural inequality and even men were born unequal. He expressed his confirmed view that the principle of social equality was the cornerstone of a stable society. For this the Social Equality Army and the like institutions were always a necessity in human society.

This Dal (volunteer corps) started in 1928 by Ambedkar was a part of his movement and a powerful weapon in his hands. He remarked:

> "There was a time when we wanted honourable place in Hindu fold; now we demand that our community should be reorganised as co-equal with Hindu society. Now we demand political equality. The Dal is pledged to establish political, social and economic equality."[125]

Addressing the Samata Sainik Dal Conference in July 1942, he observed that he had love for nonviolence, but he differentiated nonviolence from abject surrender. Although love and kindness towards all creatures was a part of the principle of nonviolence, to destroy all evil-doers was the principal element in the doctrine of ahimsa. After the assassination of Gandhiji in 1948, this organisation was banned. He remarked that to disband it was an act of cowardice.

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[124] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, pp. 78-79.

[125] *Dalitbandhu*, Special Number, p. 25.

B. G. Kher, the former chief minister of Bombay, in his foreword to the book *Aboriginal's Cry in the Wilderness—A Controversy between Ambedkar and A. V. Thakkar*, said that Ambedkar made no provision for the representatives of the aboriginal tribes in his scheme to solve the communal problem. He further said that Ambedkar made no answer to the main accusation of Thakkar that even the meagre representation which had been given to the aboriginal tribes by the 1935 Act was taken away by his scheme. A. V. Thakkar in the introduction to his book contended that Ambedkar should not be selfcentred as to propose that the aborigines should be permanently deprived of their vote merely because he thought that the tribal people were "politically undeveloped". Commenting on Ambedkar's remark that "Hindu civilisation is a civilisation of infancy", Thakkar said:

> "One who publicly burns Manu Smriti, because it preached inequality between man and man centuries ago, I hope, will not feel offended, if it be pointed out to him that he commits the same error, in an aggravated form, in the year 1945, when the world has very much advanced in the principles of equality, freedom and brotherhood."[126]

Thakkar published a letter in the press in which he accused Ambedkar of excessive favouritism for Harijans and contemptuous denial of justice to the aborigines. Ambedkar also replied to this letter in which he declared his position that he never claimed to be a universal leader of suffering humanity and remarked: "Weightage to aboriginals is possible only when scaling down the representation of Muslims will take place."[127] He tried his level best to safeguard the interests of his community.

Ambedkar urged that it was the duty of the scheduled castes to defend India's hard-won freedom. He asked his followers to forget the past difference with the Congress and other political parties. They should try to win sympathy of all political parties. He hoped that his work of India's constitution would help Hindus to understand him and also show them how the accusations hurled at him were utterly untrue.

Ambedkar blamed caste Hindus for untouchability. In the same vein he attacked government policy with regard to the scheduled castes. He was speaking on the Report of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He suggested some measures for economic emancipation. He put a new two-nation theory—one is ruling nation and the other a subject nation. He accused the police as very unsympathetic towards his community. Lastly he said that the report was a doctored and tutored document.[128]

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[126] Thakkar, A. V., *Aboriginal's Cry*, Foreword.
[127] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 17 May 1945.

Though Ambedkar was engaged in multifarious activities, still the thought that he was an untouchable was always present in his mind. He put into his biography in "Who's Who" the startling phrase "untouchable by caste". He then mentioned his marriage in 1948 to Dr Sharda Kabir of Bombay and said that she was a Brahmin by caste.[129] The thought of the future of his community always lurked in his mind. In his last days he said "What will be the condition of my brethren in villages?" and wept.[130]

Ambedkar asked Bhaurao Gaekwad to suspend the struggle for Mahar Watan Bill, because it antagonised the touchables. He emphasised that this struggle would jeopardise the interests of the Mahar community.[131] The way to court jail was regarded by him as useless as it kept them in jails without any action.[132] Later he asked his men to change the attitude of his followers in respect of satyagraha; in a way he urged his followers to discard satyagraha as a weapon.[133]

Ambedkar took a total view of these struggles. He remarked that by resorting to satyagraha and courting arrest his workers had become useless. He emphatically urged the workers to place the demands of the scheduled castes before the government, and asked them to take care that the movement should not be turned into a mass satyagraha.[134] In his last speech in the Constituent Assembly he laid emphasis on constitutional means and warned if those means failed, there would be nothing but anarchy.

[128] Ibid., 7 September 1954.
[129] Shean, *Nehru, The Years of Power*, p. 235.
[130] *Prabuddha Bharat*, Mahanirvana Number, 1956, p. 34.
[131] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 150.
[132] Ibid., p. 25.
[133] Ibid., p. 281.
[134] Ibid., pp. 332-34.

Chapter Four

RELIGION AND CONVERSION

SECTION 1—VIEWS ABOUT RELIGION

> "Some people think that religion is not essential to society. I do not hold this view. I consider the foundations of religion to be essential to life and practices of society."[1]

In all his writings and speeches Ambedkar has maintained the necessity of religion. According to him, "religion is a part of one's inheritance". In a Depressed Classes Youth Conference he observed :

> "It pains me to see youths growing indifferent to religion. Religion is not an opium as it is held by some. What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion, but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion."[2]

He further added that material comfort was by no means the solvent of all human ills. Religion to him was the driving force for human activities. He remarked, "Man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind which needs food for thought"[3] and added, "Religion instils hope in man and drives him to activity".[4]

Ambedkar regarded slavery as an antithesis of a religious society. To him religion was for the service of man and not man as a means to religion. He remarked :

> "The religion which discriminates between two followers is partial and the religion which treats crores of its adherents

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1. Keer, op. cit., p. 58.
2. Ibid., p. 304.
3. Ibid., p. 462.
4. Ibid., p. 499.

> worse than dogs and criminals and inflicts upon them insufferable disabilities is no religion at all. Religion is not the appellation for such an unjust order."[5]

According to him, "Religion must be judged by social standards, based on social ethics."[6] He linked religion with the social well-being of the people. To him religion, social status and property were all sources of power and authority. He wanted to have a religion in the sense of "spiritual principles" truly "universal", applicable to all countries and to all races.[7] He treated Hinduism as "a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations; all mixed up".[8] He called it, a "law" or "legalised class-ethics". He treated religion as a source of social and spiritual unity. But his reason and his religious conviction were circumscribed by social environment, the decaying and degenerate condition of his fellow brethren. His religious attitudes were the manifestations of a political man always vigilant for the civic rights of untouchables whose cause he expoused in his life. He remarked, "Religion and slavery are incompatible."[9]

Ambedkar has given four characteristics of religion :

(1) "Religion in the sense of morality must, therefore, remain the governing principle in every society."

(2) Religion if it is to function must be in accord with reason which is merely another name for science.

(3) Its moral code must recognise the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. Unless a religion recognises these three fundamental principles of social life, religion will be doomed.

(4) "Religion must not sanctify or ennoble poverty."[10]

According to him, religion has undergone four stages: in its original form religion was a matter of personal salvation of man's soul; in its second stage it meant the maintenance of

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5. Ibid., p. 92.
6. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 25.
7. Ibid., p. 71.
8. Ibid., p. 73.
9. Keer, op. cit., p. 92.
10. Ambedkar, "Buddha and the Future of His Religion", Article, paras 17, 20.

human brotherhood based on moral rules governing the conduct of human beings towards each other; in its third stage, men worshipped those personalities who satisfied the wants of their lives; and in its last stage it worshipped a person who performed miracles.[11] He defined religion as something that offered you prosperity or elevation first in this world and then salvation.

Where there was unity there was a good cause. Ambedkar ascribed the origin of this philosophy to the Bhagavadgita, the most important book on Hindu religion and philosophy. According to him its main theme was satyagraha. He cited examples from the Bhagavadgita because he said, it was acceptable to both the touchables and the untouchables. In his view Arjun, the Bharatiya warrior, was justified in resorting to arms in defence of a just cause.[12]

According to Ambedkar, the ideas of hero-worship, deification, and neglect of duty have ruined Hindu society and were responsible for the degradation of our country. At the appearance of a national calamity god was supposed to descend down and save the people from danger. He remarked that the result of this ideology was that instead of taking a united action against their enemies people awaited the arrival of an incarnation to do this job for them.[13] He instilled strong optimistic values in the minds of people and discarded the orthodox religious attitude; because he held that man is exonerated out and out from social responsibility by the traditional belief in incarnation. He accepted that the centre of religion should not be between man and god, but between man and man. He raised the question : "What advantage can there be in believing god?" and he answered it in an emphatic way—belief in god gave rise to the belief in the efficacy of worship and prayer, and the efficacy of worship and prayer gave rise to the office of the priest and the priest was the evil genius who created all superstitions and thereby destroyed the growth of right view. He remarked that by singing the songs of Rama people would not get a concession in rent from landlords.[14]

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[11] Keer, op. cit., p. 449.

[12] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[13] *Janata*, 11 March 1933.

[14] Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, pp. 254-55.

Ambedkar's opposition to supernaturalism was born out of a rational approach towards life. According to him, there was no use of man's intelligence if he continued to believe supernatural values. He agreed with Buddha's repudiation of supernaturalism. He had three objects in his mind : to lead man to the path of rationalism, to free man to go in search of truth, and to remove the most potent source of superstition. In his view, the belief in soul was far better than the belief in god. He thought that it created priesthood and gave priesthood complete control over man from birth to death. By denying the existence of the soul and god, he ruled out the possibility of the past karmas (acts done in previous lives) as the regulator of human existence. To him, the law of past actions as formulated in the Hindu way of life sapped completely the spirit of revolt.[15] On one occasion he appealed to his people not to depend on god or superman for the abolition of untouchability. He said that the salvation of untouchables lay in political powers and not in making pilgrimages and observances of fasts. The religious fasts, austerities and penances would not save the untouchables from starvation. He impressed upon their minds that to them bread was better than the worship of god.

According to Ambedkar, the religious conceptions in this country were so vast that they covered every aspect of life from birth to death. He stressed the need to strive hereafter to limit the definition of religion in such a manner that we should not extend it beyond beliefs and such rituals as may be connected with ceremonials which were essentially religious. He emphasised that the laws relating to tenancy on succession should not be governed by religion.

The professing of a particular religion carried with it the personal law. Ambedkar has upheld the sovereign authority of parliament to interfere in their personal law. During the debates on the Hindu Code Bill, he asserted that under the Constitution of India, "the state has retained all along in article 25 of the right to interfere in the personal law of any community in this country". He warned, "Let no community be in a state of mind that they are immune from the sovereign authority of this parliament."[16]

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[15] Ibid., p. 344.

Though Ambedkar regarded Hindutva as a joint product of touchables and untouchables, he appealed the enlightened to initiate the means for ridding India of the evil of priest-craft. The Hindu priestly classes stood in no way superior ethically, educationally or otherwise to the average member of Parsi priesthood. "He (officiating Brahmin) practises the shame of being a middleman between the unseen powers and the helpless man and makes a living by it."[17] He said : "Hinduism is a riddle of the contradictions between dignified thoughts and base behaviour."[18] To him, Hindu religion was nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions.[19]

Ambedkar in a clear-cut way enumerated the evils of Hindu religion : (1) It tends to deprive moral life of freedom and spontaneity and to reduce it to a more or less anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rules. (2) There is no loyalty to ideas, there is only conformity to commands. (3) The laws are iniquitous in that they are not the same for one class as for another. The laws are prescribed to be the same for all generations. (4) The laws are not made by certain persons called prophets or law-givers. (5) This code has been invested with the character of finality and fixity. He concluded that this religion must be destroyed and there was nothing irreligious in working for the destruction of such a religion. He emphasised that people must be enabled to realise that what they are told was not religion, but that it was really law and its abolition or amendment must be urged.[20]

Ambedkar was not against the very existence of Hinduism and Hindu leaders, but was against its wrong ideals and the tenacity with which the Hindu leaders adhered to them. According to him, Hinduism gave no support to social unity. "Hinduism and social union are incompatible. Hinduism—the traditional social structure—is the greatest obstacle to Hindu unity... Hinduism creates an eagerness to separate."[21] On this social unity depended socialistic feeling, national integration, democratic ideal and spiritual fellowship. He accepted that Hinduism was once a "missionary religion". According to him, caste was incompatible with conversion. It dragged Hinduism into a "religion of inequality". What was required was to purge it of the doctrine of varna system. It was wrong to think that he wanted to destroy Hinduism. His main concern was to reform and reconstruct it. He said : "The Hindu society should be reorganised on two main principles : equality and the absence of casteism."[22] "Without such internal strength, swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery."[23] He regarded that Vedantic idealism was nothing but a Brahminical counterpoise to the liberalising role of the Buddhist movement. To him Buddhism was a revolt against "parasitic luxury", and it prepared the foundations of "a prosperous and glorious civilisation".

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[16] Parliamentary Debates, 1951, Vol. III, p. 2950.

[17] An Article by Dr Ambedkar in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 November 1929.

[18] *Mookanayak* (Leader of the Dumb), 31 January 1920.

[19] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 72.

[20] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

Religion, as Ambedkar conceived, was a rational one, a moral one and a spiritual one. It was secular and not extramundane. He regarded Dhamma as religion. He observed : "Religion is personal... contrary to this, Dhamma is social."[24] His view of religion was social and secular and morality was the key-note of it. He remarked : "In Dhamma, there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals, ceremonies or sacrifices. Morality is the essence of Dhamma; without it there is no Dhamma".[25] He described Dhamma as righteousness, right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. One man, if he is alone, does not need Dhamma. But "society cannot do without Dhamma, i.e. right relations". Dhamma as religion thus rejects belief in god, belief in soul, worship of god, curing of the erring soul, propitiating god by prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices, etc. In short, he regarded Buddha's Dhamma as true religion, the purpose of which was to reconstruct the world by establishing right rela-

[21] Ambedkar, *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to Untouchables*, p. 187.

[22] Keer, op. cit., p. 100.

[23] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 81.

[24] Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, p. 216.

[25] Ibid., p. 323.

tions among human beings.[26] The Buddhist way of life, thus, aimed at the moral regeneration and social emancipation of human beings; each member of society had to strive for his own moral progress as well as that of other individuals. The Buddhist way of life was further divided into two paths : the Buddhist way for the laity and the Buddhist way for the bhikkus; these included the whole range of moral behaviour patterns in Buddhist society that Ambedkar strove for. According to him, the Buddhist social approach was more comprehensive and humanistic than the Marxist view of man and society. Buddha's teaching, he thought, was more suited to the needs of practical social life. Buddha tried to blend the socio-economic and political ideas on the basis of moral foundations. By stressing the unity of individuals on a social and political level he endeavoured to transform human life into an ideal one based on equality and liberty, love and sympathy. Moral and religious life, as he conceived it, was based on the social organisation and the conduct of man in society. Inspired by Buddha's sense of love and kindness, he went forward to do the great work of service to humanity. According to him, 90 per cent of Christianity was copied from Buddhism, both in substance and in form.[27] He regarded only four preceptors : Shri Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed. Buddha appealed to him most as he always preached that his disciples should not obey his commands but should follow the dictates of their conscience. There was no god in Buddhism, but the place of god was taken by morality. To him Rama, Krishna and Gandhi were the apostles of Brahminic religion. They were of no use to establish democracy. Only Buddha can be of any use in this respect. According to him, democracy and chaturvarnya are mutually exclusive. To eradicate chaturvarnya, there was no other medicine except the philosophy of Buddha. In order to purify the currents in politics Ambedkar suggested that all Hindus should observe birth-day celebrations of Buddha.[28]

The conception of a secular state was derived from the liberal democratic tradition of the West. It was the state that guaran-

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26. Ibid., p. 376.
27. Ambedkar's Speech in Katmandu.
28. *Janata*, Special Number, April 1942.

teed individual and corporate freedom of religion and dealt with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion. Constitutionally it was not connected to a particular religion nor did it seek either to promote or to interfere with religion.[29] So freedom of religion, citizenship and the separation of state and religion were the premises on which the superstructure of the secular state was raised. Ambedkar maintained that no institution which is maintained wholly out of state funds shall be used for the purpose of religious instructions irrespective of the question whether the religious instruction was given by the state or by any other body.[30] Participating in the debate on the Hindu Code Bill in parliament in 1951, he explained the concept of secularism as follows : "It (secular state) does not mean that we shall not take into consideration the religious sentiments of the people. All that a secular state means is that this parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion upon the rest of the people. That is the only limitation that the Constitution recognises."[31] He maintained that secularism did not mean abolition of religion.[32] According to him firstly, the multiplicity of religions and their subdivisions make it impossible for the state to treat the children of all these communities on a footing of equality and to provide religious instructions even if the principle was accepted. Secondly, the religions as they prevail in this country are not merely nonsocial but are even antisocial, one religion claiming that its teachings constitute the only right path for salvation, that all other religions are wrong. He remarked :

> "In view of this, it seems to me that we should be considerably disturbing the peaceful atmosphere of an institution if these controversies were brought into just opposition in the school itself. Therefore, in laying down that in state institutions there should be no religious instruction, we have, in my judgement, travelled the path of complete safety."[33]

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29. Smith, *India as a Secular State*, pp. 3-4.
30. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, pp. 870-71.
31. Parliamentary Debates, 1951, Vol. III, part ii, p. 2466.
32. Keer, op. cit., p. 418.
33. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 883.

Ambedkar looked for harmony between the principles of religion and the laws of the land. There should be no contradiction and antagonism between religion and law. This was, to him, essential for the betterment of human society. He wanted that no individual should be compelled to pay taxes, the proceeds of which were specifically appropriated for the use of any religious community of which he was not a member. He did not favour any religious coercion either by some community or by the state. State coercion especially in religious matters was least desirable in Ambedkar's scheme of social and political life. To law, all religions were respectable. He had a strong faith in the principle of secularism. Smith and Luthera have dealt with this problem of secularism in India. Luthera concluded that India is not and cannot be a secular state. Smith disagreed with this conclusion. Because, it proceeds from too narrow a definition of the secular state (Luthera equates it with separation of state and religion, which is only one of the three components, in the definition of Smith) and takes too static a view of Hindu religion. The separation of state and religion and other provisions as defended by Ambedkar show that the general content of secularism was contained in his thought. His secularism was of a radical type and rebelled against any religious ill-treatment, hatred and discrimination.

SECTION 2—CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM

As early as January 1929, Ambedkar expressed his opposition to separate temples for untouchables. In his letter to Bhaurao Gaekwad he has made this quite clear.[34] In fact he was not an idol-worshipper, on the contrary he was an iconoclast.

The social and religious struggle of untouchables took a different turn after the Mahad satyagraha in 1927. In every depressed classes conference held after that event, resolutions stressing the need to renounce Hinduism were passed. The Jalgaon conference of 29 May 1929 passed a resolution and called all the depressed class people to embrace any religion other than Hinduism. But in the first Depressed Classes Congress at Nagpur in August 1930, Ambedkar told his audience that he would not abjure the Hindu religion whatever might be the hardships inflicted upon him by the caste Hindus. The vacillation of Ambedkar was evident in this speech. But that was not his stable thought. Day by day he became convinced about the inevitability of conversion of untouchables to other religion.

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[34] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 14.

In the middle of 1933 the news spread in some circles that Ambedkar intended to embrace Islam. Subhedar Savadkar wrote to Ambedkar that it was the general opinion of his people that their "Raja" would not take such a hasty step until he had solved their problem. In reply he wrote to Savadkar from London that he had a talk with Gavai regarding the issue of conversion and told him among other things that he was determined to leave the fold of Hinduism and embrace some other religion.[35] He had also told him that he would never embrace Islam and that he was at that juncture inclined to Buddhism.[36]

The news appeared in the press that Ambedkar was thinking of making a declaration of a change of religion at the Yeola (district Nasik, Maharashtra) conference which was scheduled to meet in October 1935. A letter to appeal Ambedkar to dissuade him from the announcement was addressed to him jointly by N. C. Kelkar, L. B. Bhopatkar, Chitrav Shastri, S. M. Mate and other Hindu social reformers in Maharashtra. In his address Ambedkar said that unfortunately for him he was born a Hindu untouchable. It was beyond his power to prevent that. He continued, "I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu."[37] He, by conversion, visualised a separate community outside the Hindu fold carving out for themselves a future worthy of free citizens. The conference by a resolution stopped all struggles for raising the untouchables to a state of equality with caste Hindus, because they thought that the attempts were fruitless. The conference ended with a definite departure from the original aims and objects of its movements. Leaders of Islam and followers of

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[35] Keer, op. cit., p. 143.

[36] Ibid, p. 239.

[37] Ibid, p. 252.

Christianity thought that they might get new recruits from untouchables. The Sikhs also thought on the same lines.

All the great leaders were shocked by Ambedkar's declaration to renounce Hinduism. Gandhiji said : "It is an unfortunate event. But religion is a more integral part of one's own self than one's body. Change of faith will not serve the causes." He remarked : "Religion is not a matter of barter."[38] V. D. Savarkar warned the depressed classes against taking such a dangerous step. He saw no possibility of their receiving treatment of equality under Christianity or Islam in India. He asked Ambedkar to fight valiantly for equality. Dr Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Indian National Congress, said that Ambedkar was making the work of social reformers more difficult. Deorukhkar, Kajrolkar, the depressed class leaders, also opposed Ambedkar. Dr Solanki and Srinivasan (colleagues of Ambedkar at the Round Table Conference) also expressed that untouchables should build up strength and fight for rights and principles.

About Gandhiji's comment Ambedkar said that the Yeola decision was a deliberate one since inequality was the very basis of Hindu religion and its ethics was such that the depressed classes could not attain their full manhood under it. He agreed with Gandhiji that religion was necessary, but did not agree that a man must stick to his ancestral religion even though he found that religion repugnant to his notions. The Nasik orthodox Hindus were exceedingly jubilant over the decision of the depressed classes to leave Hinduism. The non-Brahmins thought that the decision on religious matters was the concern of the Brahmins. The orthodox Hindus applied to the collector of Nasik for the removal of ban on the Nasik chariot procession. Enlightened and political-minded opinion deplored the decision.

Ambedkar told the Masurkar Maharaj that if the untouchables abjured Hinduism, that would not affect much; whereupon the Maharaj replied that it would be the death of Hindus in the long run. He expressed that the caste Hindu leaders should pledge their word that they would extirpate the evil of untouchability within a prescribed period. The Maharaj emphasised the enormity of the problem. Ambedkar said that he would wait five or ten years for a change of heart. He said that in the meantime Maharashtrian Brahmins should instal K. K. Sakat, a depressed class leader, into the gadi of Shankaracharya for one year and that a hundred families of Chitpavan Brahmins should fall at the feet of the new Shankaracharya as a token of their change of heart and acceptance of equal status. He further said: "Had I been converted to Islam I am sure crores of rupees would have been showered at our feet, and I would have ruined this country within five years. But I do not desire that I may be recorded in history as an iconoclast."[39]

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[38] Gandhi, *Harijan*, 21 March 1936.

Bitter controversy went on in the length and breadth of the country. Ambedkar said that the conversion would take place in five years' time and if in the meanwhile the caste Hindus assured him by a positive result, he would reconsider the position. He wanted to absorb his community into some powerful community and he was thinking of embracing Sikhism. Referring to Muslim religion, he said that if there were any people with whom religious sentiments and practices made it extremely risky to interfere, they were the Muslims.

The Untouchable Youth Conference (Poona, 1936) ended with victory for Ambedkar in his own circle. The leaders of most of the untouchable communities, except those of the Mahar community, declared their unmistakable disapproval of Ambedkar's move, as they held that conversion would not materially or economically change their fate and would be disastrously disadvantageous. The caste Hindu workers characterised Ambedkar's attitude as a runaway mentality. Some far-sighted Hindu reformers hailed him as a messiah born to reorganise the Hindu society and revitalise Hinduism. Some characterised it as bluff and stunt. He had even declared that the untouchables by their struggle would purify Hinduism and wash its stains with their blood. The Youth Conference supported Ambedkar's move at Yeola conference and stressed the value of collective action as declared in that resolution.

Ambedkar addressed the Sikh Mission's Conference which met at Amritsar on 13 and 14 April 1936. He expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though he had decided to renounce Hinduism. Ambedkar's participation in this conference roused suspicion in the minds of the committee of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal, Lahore, scheduled to meet in Easter days of 1936.

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[39] *Dnyanadut*, Diwali Number, 1963.

A conference of Mahar community met on 30 and 31 May 1936, at Dadar, Bombay. Its object was to devise ways and means to implement the resolution passed at Yeola. Ambedkar in his address said that so long as they remained in the Hindu fold, there was no salvation for them. He observed that the function of a true religion was the uplift of the individual. Hindu religion did not teach the virtues like fellow-feeling, equality and liberty, and failed to provide them a favourable environment; therefore, leaving the Hindu fold and seeking another religion became imperative. In conclusion, he quoted a passage from Buddha, but did not mention what religion he has decided to choose. The conference urged the Mahar community to refrain henceforth from worshipping Hindu deities, to put a stop to the observance of Hindu festivals and to stop visiting Hindu places of worship. In that conference he clarified that the problem of untouchables was the problem of class war. He said that the conversion would bestow upon untouchables the freedom from social bondage, economic advancement and progress.

Ambedkar had a talk with Dr Moonje, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, on 18 June 1936. Dr Moonje had a proposal to convert all untouchables to Sikhism. M. C. Rajah wrote to Gandhiji, Rajaji and Malaviyaji and sought their advice. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said that either the untouchables were Hindus and enjoyed the privileges under the Poona Pact or they ceased to be Hindus and forfeited them. Replying to this Ambedkar said that it was a Congress stunt to frighten him, his party and to coerce him and his community into remaining in the Hindu fold.[40]

Gandhiji, Malaviyaji and Rajaji had replied to Rajah declaring their opposition to the move of Ambedkar and Dr Moonje. Moonje's move was to counteract the Muslim influence. Ambedkar's statement, which Dr Moonje had enclosed with his letter to Rajah, favoured Sikhism in the interests of the Hindus and added that it was the duty of the Hindus to help the Sikhs in

[40] Keer, op. cit., p. 276.

removing the economic and political difficulties that would be in the way of the neo-Sikhs. Explaining why he chose Sikhism, Ambedkar further observed, "Sikhism is the best. If the depressed classes join Islam or Christianity, they not only go out of the Hindu religion, but they also go out of the Hindu culture. On the other hand, if they become Sikhs, they remain within the Hindu culture."[41] He said further: "Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalise the depressed classes. If they go over to Islam, the number of Muslims would be doubled, and the danger of Muslim domination would be real."[42]

Rajaji described this move of Ambedkar and Moonje as a diabolical proposal. As regards the views expressed by Gandhiji and Malaviyaji, Ambedkar said that they had now no right to complain as they had utterly failed to carry out the promises which they made at the time of Poona Pact for the uplift of the depressed classes. He said further,

> "The move for conversion to Sikhism has been approved by a number of prominent Hindus including Shankaracharya, Dr Kurtakoti. If I have gone to the length of considering it an alternative, it is because I felt a certain amount of responsibility for the fate of Hindus."[43]

Ambedkar took one more step in respect of the conversion movement. He deputed on 18 September 1936 a group of his followers to the Sikh Mission at Amritsar to study the Sikh religion.

While the preparations for the 1937 general election were going on, Ambedkar left for Geneva on Wednesday, 11 November 1936. It was said that it was his inner motive to go to London to sound British statesmen whether the safeguards provided for the depressed classes in the new constitution would be available to them even if they went over to Sikhism. Prior to his interviews with British statesmen, he had consulted some German and other European jurists of world fame as to the possibility of their retaining the reserved seats in the provincial assemblies if the depressed classes went over to Sikhism.

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41. Ibid., p. 278.
42. *The Times of India*, Bombay, 24 July 1936.
43. Ibid., 8 August 1936.

Surba Tipnis, a close colleague of Ambedkar from Mahad, asked him, "Instead of conversion, why do you not establish a new religion?"

"I am a Mahar and not a Shankaracharya. Who will follow the religion established by a Mahar?", Ambedkar replied.

In this connection Tipnis told the representative of Mahad College that Ambedkar had a deep respect for Shankaracharya and had said : "Had I not been born an untouchable, my inherent qualities would have become more useful to society." He felt very sorry that his fellow brethren did not know the worth of his precious qualities.[44]

It was maintained that the conversion would make no difference to the condition of the untouchables. A conclusion to this effect could be right only on a comparison between untouchables on the one hand and caste Hindus on the other. But if on comparison it is found that the untouchable suffered in his earnings, in his employment and in other respects in a competitive society as against a caste Hindu, and if this disadvantage was attributable to no factor other than untouchability then it would have to be admitted that the case for conversion was strong.[45]

Though Ambedkar made up his mind and called upon his followers to renounce Hinduism and embrace any other religion than Hinduism, he was swayed by Buddhism. The shadow of Buddhism was lurking over him. Since his boyhood he was interested in Buddhism, and regarded Buddha as a preceptor. In his speeches he had outlined the struggle between Brahminism and Buddhism and the counterrevolution led by Brahminism. The quarrel was on one issue and that was "What is truth?" Analysing some aspects of the Vedas he said that certain portions of the Vedas were a forgery introduced at a later stage. Today we were in the grip of counterrevolutionaries and if some very quick action was not taken, we might bring greater disaster to this country. Speaking in a Poona meeting in November 1944, he said that every religious book written in olden times was also a political book, and the Gita must be considered a

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44. *Mahad College Magazine*, March 1962.

45. Ambedkar, Preface to *Condition of Working Class in Bombay* by Pradhan.

political book aimed at upholding the teachings of the Vedas and Brahminism to a supreme position.[46]

According to Ambedkar, merits of Buddhist philosophy were as follows:

(a) Buddhism demanded living experience and a life divine, attainable here and now, not after death.

(b) It was a realism and never an idealism.

(c) It upheld liberty, equality, truth and justice; it emphasised humanity, love and peace.

(d) It was dynamic, scientific and all-embracing.

(e) Its explanation of life and its meaning and purpose of birth and death and its aftermath were very clear, intelligible and logical.

(f) Above all, man was the centre of his study and examination and not anything outside of him.

He visualised that Hindu society was static, untouchability was recognised by Hindu religion and caste was the corner-stone to the arch of Hinduism. He weighed the merits of the Hindu dharma as against the above merits of Buddhism and finally resolved to embrace Buddhism.[47]

The reasons why Ambedkar embraced Buddhism can be summarised thus:

(1) He tried to prove that the untouchables were Buddhists. In his thesis on the Origin of Untouchability, he made it clear that today's untouchables were once Buddhists.

(2) Buddhism was an Indian religion and the Buddha was nearer to the untouchable masses.

(3) Buddhism could withstand even the severest scientific test and had the power and capacity to direct the destinies of the modern world.

(4) The untouchables would join with the world Buddhist community and thus pave the way for world brotherhood.[48]

Ambedkar attacked the godmen in Hinduism. He said that Buddha's religion was based on morality. It was based on ethics and the Buddha acted as a guide and not as a god whereas

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[46] *Christian Century*, 1956, Vol. 73, p. 1494.

[47] Deva and Wagh, *Dr Ambedkar and Conversion*, p. 4.

[48] Ibid., p. 29.

Krishna said that he was the god of gods; Christ said he was god's son and Mohammed Paigamber said that he was the last messenger of god. Except the Buddha all founders of religions claimed for themselves the role of mokshadata (deliverer) and claimed infallibility for themselves, while the Buddha was satisfied with the role of margadata (guide). According to him, the religion of the Buddha was morality. Dharma to Brahmins was yajnas and sacrifices to god. In place of karma the Buddha substituted morality as the essence of dharma. The social gospel of Hinduism was inequality whereas Buddhism was for equality.[49]

In May 1950 Ambedkar told a representative of *Janata* that he was definitely inclined towards Buddhism. As regards Hinduism, he said that it went through three stages: the Vedic religion, Brahminism and Hinduism. It was during the period of Brahminism that Buddhism was born. Brahminism preached inequality, and Buddhism preached equality. It was not true that after the days of Shankaracharya Buddhism was dead in India. It was going on for years together. In fact, Shankaracharya and his teacher were both Buddhists. According to him, the decline and downfall of Buddhism in India were due to the adoption of some rituals and practices from Buddhism by the Vaishnava and Shaiva cults which were vociferous in their propaganda against Buddhism. The Mohammedan invasions massacred Buddhist priests and as a consequence they left Bharat. The difficult practices of Buddhism and the unfavourable political atmosphere of India served as a brake to the advancement of Buddhism.[50] According to him, the hero worship practised by Buddhists acted against the Vedic, i.e. national religion. Godlessness, overemphasis on redemption, sad tone, unconcern with the world, neglect of family and afterwards the extraterritorial sympathies were other causes of the decay of Buddhism in India.[51]

In December 1954 Ambedkar went to Rangoon to attend the Third Buddhist World Conference. In the course of his speech he said that Ceylon and Burma were in the forefront of the Buddhist countries. Buddhism had far-reaching effects on Hinduism and cow-protection was a victory of the Buddhist principle of nonviolence, he added. He described the provision for the study of Pali made in the constitution, the inscription of Buddhistic aphorism on the frontage of the imposing Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, and the acceptance of the Ashoka Chakra as a national symbol as his personal achievements.[52] The government of India had declared Buddha Jayanti a holiday mainly through his efforts.

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[49] Ambedkar, Speech on Buddha Anniversary in Delhi, 1950.

[50] *Janata*, 10 June 1950.

[51] Keer, op. cit., p. 420.

While unveiling an image of Buddha in a newly constructed Buddha Vihar at Dehu Road near Poona, Ambedkar told his audience that the image of the god Vithoba at Pandharpur was in reality the image of the Buddha. He said further that the name of the god Pandurang was derived from Pundalik. Pundalik meant lotus and lotus was called Pandurang in Pali. So Pandurang was none other than Buddha. According to him, Buddhism disappeared from India because of the wavering attitude of the laity which worshipped many other gods and goddesses set up by Brahmins to destroy Buddhism.[53]

Ambedkar announced starting of a Buddhist seminary at Bangalore to train preachers for propagating the faith in India. Dr Felix Valyi, who was in Tokyo, desired him to take part in the Round Table Conferences on the origin of Indian thought with special reference to Buddhism and Jainism. These conferences were held in Tokyo under the auspices of the Society for International Cultural Relations sponsored by the government of Japan. Ambedkar replying to Dr Valyi said that India was inhospitable to Buddha as it had been in the past.[54]

While talking on the British Broadcasting Corporation, London, in May 1956 Ambedkar laid down the reasons why he preferred Buddhism. He said : "Buddhism gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches prajna (understanding) as against superstition and supernaturalism, karuna (love) and samata (equality)... Neither god nor soul can save the society." Ambedkar had reservations and wrong notions about Marx and his ideas as well as about communism. He observed :

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52. Ibid., p. 478.
53. Ibid., pp. 479-80.
54. Ibid., p. 487.

> "Buddhistic countries that have gone over to communism do not understand what communism is. Communism of the Russian type aims at bringing it about by a bloody revolution. The Buddhist communism brings it about by a bloodless revolution. The South-East Asians should give political form to Buddha's teaching... Poverty cannot be an excuse for sacrificing human freedom."[55]

Referring to Marx's philosophy, he observed, "Man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind which needs food for thought. Religion instils hope in man and drives him to activity. Hindu religion has watered down the enthusiasm of the downtrodden. And I found it necessary to change my faith and embrace Buddhism."[56] On 24 May 1956, he declared on the day of Buddha Jayanti celebrations at Nare Park in Bombay that he would embrace Buddhism in October 1956.

In reply to V. D. Savarkar, who attacked Buddhism for its creed of nonviolence, Ambedkar said that Hinduism believed in god; Buddhism had no god. Hinduism believed in soul. According to Buddhism, there was no soul. Hinduism believed in chaturvarnya and caste system. Buddhism had no place for caste system and chaturvarnya. He declared his resolve to build a magnificent temple of Buddha.

On 23 September, Ambedkar issued a press note announcing that his conversion to Buddhism would take place at Nagpur on the Dassara day, 14 October 1956, between 9 and 11 a.m. He himself preferred Nagpur which was a historic town where the Buddhist Nagas flourished in ancient times. In a speech at Nagpur on 15 October 1956, he told the audience why he preferred Nagpur for this ceremony. The Naga people propagated Buddhism in India. They were the enemies of Aryans. There was evidence to show that the Nagas have been burnt by the Aryas. Buddhism was flourishing because the Shudras and Atishudras embraced it. Nagpur was the land of the Nagas.[57]

According to Ambedkar, Buddhism was a true religion because it led to a life guided by the three principles, knowledge,

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55. Ibid., p. 487.
56. Ibid., p. 499.
57. *Baudha Diksha*, Special Number, p. 5.

right path and compassion. He remarked : "Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture. I have taken care that my conversion will not harm the tradition of the culture and history of this land."[58] In Buddhism he discovered a ray of hope and light for all communities. He contended that the Buddha sought to raise the social status of the servile classes and he believed in the necessity and urgency of the social and religious reforms which the poor, the fallen and the weak needed. The creed of Buddha was not only a protest, but a challenge to the whole of Hindu society's unfair behaviour-patterns. And for the individual he said, "Buddhism teaches social freedom, intellectual freedom, economic freedom and political freedom... equality not between man and man only but between man and woman."[59] He further remarked: "It is therefore quite necessary to tackle the younger generation and to tell them whether Buddhism can be a substitute for communism. It is only that Buddhism can hope to survive."[60]

Ambedkar had misconception regarding communism. To him, communism was not a remedy for the removal of poverty. He remarked that even in Russia there was poverty; but poverty could not be an excuse for sacrificing human freedom. Once it was realised that Buddhism was a social gospel, its revival would be an everlasting event.[61] He said: "If the countries which are Buddhist can develop the will to spread Buddhism the task of spreading Buddhism will not be difficult... to spread Buddhism, is to serve mankind."[62]

Ambedkar held a press conference on 13 October 1956. He told the newsmen that his Buddhism would cling to the tenets of the faith as preached by the Buddha himself. He asked the newsmen why they wanted his men to remain Harijans to enjoy only such "benefits" as those of reservation. He asked them whether the Brahmins were prepared to be untouchables to enjoy these privileges. He also declared what he had once told Mahatma Gandhi: "Though I differ from you on the issue of un-

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58. Keer, op. cit., p. 495.
59. Ambedkar, *Buddha and the Future of His Religion*, para 23.
60. Ambedkar, *Buddhism and Communism*, para 2.
61. Keer, op. cit., p. 487.
62. Ambedkar, *Buddha and the Future of His Religion*, para 29.

touchability, when the time comes I will choose only the least harmful way for the country. And that is the greatest benefit I am conferring the country by embracing Buddhism; for Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture." He predicted that the wave of mass conversion would spread all over the country and India would become the Buddhist country. The motto बुद्धं सरणं गच्छामि means : "I am surrendering myself to the person possessed of knowledge." The name of the person was immaterial. Knowledge was religion. संघं सरणं गच्छामि is another motto—"I am surrendering myself to sanghs—guilds." Sangh means social life. To him, Buddha was a great socialist of his times. He was a rationalist and he rooted out the monopoly of Brahmins.[63]

According to Ambedkar, Buddhism could be a universal religion. He said in the interview on 13 October 1956 at Nagpur that he would not remain a member of the Scheduled Castes Federation after conversion to Buddhism. In the Baudh Sangh all were equal. They had no different castes. He thought, "The Buddhist religion will uplift the world."[64] After his conversion to Buddhism on 14 October 1956, he said that by discarding the ancient religion which stood for inequality and oppression today he was reborn and felt as if released from the hell.[65] He was deeply moved when he said: "I renounce Hinduism." He denounced Hinduism, its customs and traditions and declared that from that moment onwards he would strive for the spread of equality among human beings.

Ambedkar received no message from any great Indian leader such as Pandit Nehru, Dr Radhakrishnan, C. Rajagopalachari or Dr Rajendra Prasad. Conversion of religion was no solution, said Rajbhoj, Ambedkar's secretary. Ambedkar reminded them of his vow taken in 1935 : "Even though I am born a Hindu I will not die a Hindu." He fulfilled his vow. Addressing his partymen, he said that they were interested more in politics than in religion, while he himself was interested more in religion than in politics. He had the satisfaction of having accomplished a great deed in establishing the revival of Buddhism in India.

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[63] *Mahanirvana*, Special Number, p. 17.

[64] *Baudha Diksha*, Special Number.

[65] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 349.

The religious conversion brought out by him on a mass scale was an unprecedented event in the history of India. He visualised that religious conversion was essential to rouse the rational consciousness of man against religious hypocrisy and dishonesty. His whole approach to this problem was purely humanistic. It was for the entire change of traditional pattern of society for providing physical possibilities for all. It was a revolt against the suppression and enslavement of humanity. His religious conversion was not inspired by any material motive. The revolt which Ambedkar mobilised culminated in Buddhist movement. It was a liberating force.

The humanistic approach of Ambedkar towards the problem of conversion to Buddhism was invalidated by his wrong approach towards Marxism. He attacked Marxism and emphasised Buddhism as an alternative to Marxism. These ideological formulations were counter to his previous thought that the problem of untouchables was the problem of class war (p. 87). In his later assertions he did not explain how conversion would bestow upon untouchables the freedom from social bondage. He posed the problem of class war, but instead of waging the war he found solace in religion. As he took contradictory positions, he could not properly guide the liberating force and his leap into escapism manifested his reactionary step.

Ambedkar was sure that Buddhism would survive only when younger generation was convinced that it could be a substitute to communism (p. 94). It seems he at first fixed an answer and to justify it outlined the theory afterwards. He failed to adopt scientific method to eradicate material sorrows and tried to find an alternative one in conversion to Buddhism.

Chapter Four

VIEWS ON CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

SECTION 1—EXTENSION OF REPRESENTATION TO THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

Ambedkar was one of the few statesmen-politicians in India who took active part in all the deliberations of constitution-making, from the Montford Reforms (1919) to Cabinet Mission Scheme (1946) (except Cripps Proposals). During this period he was the leader of his community. What follows is a short account of the part played by him in these deliberations.

The Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) granted separate electorates to Muslims and Europeans on communal basis. The separatist tendencies began to be evinced and a breach between Hindus and Muslims became inevitable. In 1916 the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League, which became known as the Congress-League Scheme, envisaged partial selfgovernment. At the same time the aim of India was proclaimed to be "an equal partner in the empire within the self-governing dominions". The Lucknow Pact accepted the system of separate electorates. This pact was defended by Tilak and opposed by Malaviya. "The Lucknow Pact made the great error of accepting as inevitable the communal electoral division initiated by Lord Minto and Lord Morley."[1] Before Morley-Minto Reforms, the Muslims requested the government not to register the untouchables as Hindus.[2]

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms was published in 1918. The reforms based on dyarchy were enacted at the end of 1919 and came into force in 1920.

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1. Dutt, R. P., *India Today*, p. 376.
2. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 235.

The Franchise Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Southborough was appointed to deal with franchise problems in the light of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. This committee consisted among others of Srinivas Shastri and Surendra Nath Banerjee as members, and top-ranking nationalist leaders like Rajendra Prasad, Motilal Nehru and Malaviya gave evidence. Ambedkar was called upon to give evidence. He demanded separate electorates and reserved seats for the depressed classes in proportion to their population. In addition he demanded that the representatives of untouchables must be elected by the votes of untouchables only. The committee did not feel justified in admitting the claims of separate electorates.[3]

The nationalist leaders were demanding home rule for India, but Ambedkar remarked, they were not ready to give representation to the untouchables. He further said: "It was the duty of the advanced classes to put all on social equality. For everybody recognised that home rule was as much the birth right of a Brahmin, as that of a Mahar."[4] The Southborough Committee allowed the communal representation to Musalmans, and it thought it better to have recourse to nomination in the case of depressed classes.[5]

In the All-India Conference of Untouchables which was held on 30 and 31 May and 1 June 1920, V. R. Shinde, who championed the cause of the depressed classes, suggested that the representatives of the untouchables should be selected by the members of the Legislative Council, and not by the government or by the institutions belonging to untouchables. Ambedkar resented the attitude taken by V. R. Shinde, and the conference, by a special resolution, protested against such a step being taken by government.[6] Ambedkar's insistence on the principle that the representatives of untouchables be elected by the untouchables alone gathered momentum.

To revise the Act of 1919, the British government announced the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission under the

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3. Southborough Committee Report, p. 11.
4. *The Times of India*, Bombay, 16 January 1919.
5. Southborough Committee Report, p. 135.
6. Keer, Dr, *Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, p. 42.

chairmanship of Sir John Simon. It was appointed on 26 November 1927. The non-Indian composition of the commission roused the nationalist sentiment and it was boycotted by the Congress Party. The liberals also boycotted it. Except for the Shafi group of Muslims and the Justice Party of Madras, practically all political parties had turned their back on the Simon Commission.[7] The Congress raised and carried on agitation against it. The students boycotted the commission and protested with black flags and placards with the slogan "Go Back, Simon !" "Politically minded India had organised and marshalled an effective boycott both of the Statutory Commission and its Indian wing."[8] To cooperate with the Simon Commission, the central government appointed a committee for all British India, and every Legislative Council elected its provincial committee to work with the Simon Commission. On the Bombay Provincial Committee was selected Ambedkar along with the other members of the Bombay Legislative Council on 3 August 1928. Ambedkar's students in the Law College, Bombay, boycotted his lectures. He was dubbed as a British stooge.

Ambedkar urged that the depressed classes should be classified as a distinct community, entirely different from the Hindus. He emphasised that seats should be reserved for them in the legislature and that the present practice of nominating one or two members should cease, and they should have at least 22 out of 140 seats in the Bombay Legislative Council. He refused to admit that the depressed classes on account of their illiteracy were less intelligent than the other communities. He remarked that there was really no link between Hindus and the depressed classes. Therefore, they must be regarded as a distinct and independent community. He claimed reserved seats on the same basis as the Mohammedan minority. He claimed reserved seats accompanied by adult suffrage, but in the absence of such an arrangement separate electorates. He argued that he would like certain safeguards in the constitution itself or Instrument of Advice to the Governor regarding the education of the depressed classes and their entry into the public services. Lord Burnham, a member of the Simon Commission, asked Ambedkar if he had any other proposal if he did not get either adult suffrage or separate electorates. Ambedkar replied that he must have either, adding that adult suffrage would counter mischief, if any.[9] In his evidence he stressed the need for greater political protection to the depressed class minority. According to him, it did not matter whether he called him a Hindu or a non-Hindu as long as he was outside the pale of Hinduism. He denounced the efforts of the Hindu social reformers as platform speeches. He differed with the committee (appointed by the Bombay Legislative Council) and did not sign that report, but submitted a separate report on 17 May 1929. Eighteen depressed class associations gave evidence, 16 pleaded for separate electorates.

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[7] Menon, V. P., *The Transfer of Power*, p. 35.
[8] Ibid., p. 42.

The All-Parties Conference convened by the Congress Party met in February and later in May 1928, and appointed a committee under Pandit Motilal Nehru to draft a Swaraj Constitution for India. This was a first attempt at constitution-making. It mainly aimed at closing the Hindu-Muslim breach.

The report, published in 1930, emphatically stated that the political value of the depressed classes had grown in the eyes of the government with the growth of the national movement, as the Congress has made the abolition of untouchability one of the principal programmes since 1920. The government had given them nominated seats. In the report no special provisions were made for the representation of the depressed classes in the legislatures. The report regarded special electorates and reservation of seats as "unsound and harmful" and opposed nomination.[10] The report advocated the abolition of the depressed classes by raising them economically and socially by giving them adult suffrage and educational and other facilities. The Simon Commission disregarded the meaning and aim of Indian nationalism and its forces. It was the opinion of the commission that the Nehru Report was not an agreed solution. "Enthusiasm for the Nehru Report was in any case killed by the rallying tactics of the Simon Commission."[10a]

The Congress Working Committee issued invitations to all prominent Muslim, Parsi, Christian, Sikh, Anglo-Indian organisations and even the non-Brahmin institutions and the Dravida Mahajan Sabha, but not to the Depressed Classes Institute led by Ambedkar or for that matter any depressed class institution.[11] Ambedkar resented this attitude of the nationalist leaders. He criticised the constituencies formed in the Nehru Report and said that this arrangement was "to preserve the upper class hegemony and Brahminical rule in society". He said that keeping away the depressed classes from the political power was the sure way of preserving the Brahminical order of society and added that because the Nehru Committee consisted of Brahmins and upper-class men, they had done it deliberately.

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[9] *Indian Annual Register,* July-December 1928, Vol. II, pp. 94-97.

[10] The Nehru Report.

[10a] Menon, op. cit, p. 36.

The Nehru Report accepted in principle the separation of Sind, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province as demanded by the Muslims in their meeting at Delhi on 20 March 1927. If the above demand of Muslims was granted then the Muslims might be ready to give up the demand of separate electorates. He emphatically said that this plan to keep the Hindus in Muslim-majority provinces at the mercy of Muslims in the Nehru Report was dangerous, and it was better to grant them separate electorates. The demand of the Muslims for residuary powers to the constituent states granted by the Nehru Report was also criticised by Ambedkar.[12]

The British government convened a Round Table Conference (RTC) in London in 1930 to frame a constitution for India with a view to satisfying the demand of the people of India. The RTC consisted of 89 members, out of whom 16 were representatives of the three British parties, 53 Indian members of the delegation representing different interests except the noncooperating Congress, and 20 of Indian princely states. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan represented the depressed classes.

The first session of the RTC was opened on 12 November 1930. Ambedkar knew the importance of this conference. He remarked that this was the first time when the British government in its history accepted the principle of discussing the constitutional problems with Indians, and the representatives of the depressed classes were first called; in a way it was a recognition of the independent position of the scheduled classes.[13]

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[11] Keer, op. cit., p. 14.

[12] Khairmoday, op. cit., pp. 213-14.

Ambedkar and Srinivasan submitted to the RTC a scheme of political safeguards for the protection of the depressed classes in the future constitution of selfgoverning India.[14] He suggested that the untouchables should be named as non-caste Hindus, protestant Hindus or nonconformist Hindus. He clarified that the untouchables had a separate existence from Hindus. They were somewhat between serfs and slaves. Hindus called them as their men only to usurp their rights.[15] He said that he would uphold the demand for swaraj and, if possible, would place the problem of untouchables before the League of Nations.[16] In his speech Ambedkar attacked the British raj in India. He said that the wrongs of untouchables have remained as open sores and they have not been righted, although 150 years of British rule have rolled away. He upheld the demand for dominion status. He remarked:

> "We must have a government in which the men in power will give their undivided allegiance to the best interests of the country. We feel nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political powers in our own hands...the depressed classes have waited too long for time to work its miracle. Let the consent of the people be the touchstone of your new constitution."[17]

After the general discussions in the plenary session, the conference appointed nine subcommittees. Ambedkar served on the Minorities Subcommittee, Provincial Subcommittee and the Services Subcommittee, with the great luminaries from India and England. He demanded that the depressed classes should be regarded for electoral purposes as a separate community, disjoined from the Hindu population at large, and "that they could not consent to any selfgoverning constitution for India unless

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13. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 92.
14. RTC Minorities Subcommittee, Vol. II, p. 150.
15. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, pp. 98-99.
16. Keer, op. cit., p. 145.
17. RTC Proceedings 1930-31, pp. 123-29.

their demands were met in a reasonable manner".[18] He demanded common citizenship, free use of common rights, adequate representation in legislatures and government services and emphasised that unless representatives of untouchable community were included in the cabinet, the work of socal uplift and removal of untouchability would not be recognised. The evolution of the conception of a united India and definite emergence of the depressed classes in the political picture of India were the achievements of Ambedkar's eloquence.

As a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on 5 March 1931, the civil disobedience movement was withdrawn and Gandhiji promised to attend the second session of the Round Table Conference in London. Gandhiji, Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Malaviya represented the Indian National Congress at the conference. Gandhiji was against the political separation of the untouchables from the Hindus. The second session of the RTC began on 7 September 1931. The conference was to reexamine and amplify the reports prepared by the Federal Structure Committee and the Minorities Committee.

As regards Gandhiji's remark that the representatives of the conference were nominees of the government, Ambedkar had not the slightest doubt that even if the depressed classes of India were given the chance of electing their representatives to this conference, he would all the same find a place here. He stressed: "Those who are negotiating ought to understand that they are not plenipotentiaries at all; that whatever may be the representative character of Mr Gandhi, and the Congress people, they certainly are not in a position to bind us—certainly not."[19] He suggested two alternatives to solve the problem of minorities—one by the Minorities Subcommittee or if this is not possible, the government should undertake the solution of that problem. He stressed that power should be shared by all communities in their respective proportions.

A supplementary memorandum on the claims of the depressed classes for special representation was presented to the Minorities Committee. Ambedkar advocated separate electorates. He said

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18. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem of India*, p. 120.
19. RTC, II Session, p. 526.

that they were not to be changed unless a referendum of the voters held at the demand of a majority of their representatives in the legislatures concerned resulted in an absolute majority of the members of the depressed classes having the franchise; no such referendum should be resorted to until after 20 years and until universal adult suffrage has been established.

The leading representatives of the Muslims, the depressed classes, a section of the Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians jointly submitted a memorandum. This was known as the Minority Pact. It stated that there should be no discrimination in enjoyment of civil rights on account of untouchability; generous treatment in the matter of recruitment to public services and the opening of enlistment in the police and military services; right to appeal for depressed classes to the Governor-General and adequate representation.

This pact enraged Gandhiji. In the course of his speech he said that he had regard for Ambedkar's ability, but added that Ambedkar's bitter experiences in life had warped his judgement. Gandhiji said that he would not mind the untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity but he would resist with his life any attempt at reservation to untouchables. Ambedkar did not reply to this argument of Gandhiji. He also did not sign the requisition of the members of the Minorities Committee authorising the British Premier to settle the communal problem. Gandhiji signed it. Ambedkar submitted a memorandum to MacDonald defending the interests of Hindus as against the Muslims.[20] According to Ambedkar, Gandhiji's partiality, discriminating conduct in solving the problems of minorities, his equivocal manner of dealing, his absolute disregard for the other representatives and the insults he inflicted upon them did not help Gandhiji to solve the problem tactfully.

During all those discussions the way out for Ambedkar was to side with the Britishers and secure recognition to his cause and sanction for his demands. The second alternative was to side with Gandhiji and to get special representation with joint electorates.[21]

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[20] Keer, op. cit., p. 186.

[21] Ibid.

In Provincial Constitutions Subcommittee Ambedkar demanded complete provincial autonomy. According to him, provincial governments ought to be left with as complete an autonomy as was possible under the circumstances. Provincial autonomy must also consider provincial questions of all-India character; undefined powers must be left with the central government; and protection for the interests of the minorities and the depressed classes must be assured. As regards the communal representation in the cabinet, he said that their interests might be affected very prejudicially by the policy of ministers whose dominant interest was communalism. Instead of one common Indian civil service to man all departments, he preferred specialisation of services in the interest of greater efficiency. He feared that here also communal feelings might vitiate the personnel.[22] Dr Moonje, the Hindu Sabha leader, and M. C. Rajah, the depressed class member in the Central Assembly, made a pact on the basis of reserved seats and joint electorates. Rajah submitted his memorandum to the British Premier telegraphically giving details of his pact with Moonje. Rajah had supported Ambedkar before, but later he made a somersault. The pact was criticised and opposed by Ambedkar. It was also repudiated by All-India Depressed Classes Congress at Kamptee in May 1932. It appreciated the magnificent services of Ambedkar and Srinivasan at the Round Table Conference.

The Franchise Committee drafted its report giving detailed proposals on which to base the revision of franchise and distribution and demarcation of the constituencies for the new legislatures, central and provincial. Ambedkar submitted a separate note. One of the most important decisions of the committee was on the exact definition of the term "depressed classes". The Indian Legislature Committee in its decision in 1916, Sir Henry Sharp, the Educational Commissioner under the government of India, and the Southborough Franchise Committee had grouped the depressed classes with the aboriginals or hill tribes, or criminals or with others, but the Lothian Franchise Committee said that they were of the opinion that the term should be applied only to those who were untouchables. This was clearly Ambedkar's victory as he had insisted in his note to the committee that the test of untouchability "must be applied in its notional sense as untouchability in its literal sense has ceased to obtain".[23]

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[22] RTC, II Session, p. 372.

The British Premier gave his award on communal issue in India on 14 August 1932. According to this award, the depressed classes were granted separate seats in the provincial assemblies and the right of double vote under which they were to elect their own representatives and to vote also in the general constituencies. The Communal Award gave separate electorates to the Muslims, Sikhs, Europeans, Christians and Anglo-Indians. It perpetuated divisions among Indians. In the history of India untouchables were first given independent political existence and legal right to shape the future of the motherland. It was a victory of Ambedkar's ideology of uplifting the untouchables.[24]

Gandhiji tried his level best to oppose every attempt at separating untouchables from caste Hindus. He wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and remarked that separate electorates would vivisect and disrupt the nation. They were neither a penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under. He said further : "I informed His Majesty's government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorates for the depressed classes I must fast unto death."[25] Ambedkar described this proposed fast of Gandhiji as a "political stunt".[26]

Pandit Malaviya told the conference of Hindu leaders in Bombay on 19 September 1932 to resolve the deadlock and save the life of Gandhiji, and informed Ambedkar about it. Sir Chunilal Mehta told the conference that Gandhiji had no personal objection to the reservation of seats for the depressed classes. Ambedkar remarked that to save the life of Gandhiji it was necessary to alter the British Premier's award, and to amend it, it was necessary to get his approval. All eyes of the nation turned to Ambedkar. He issued a statement to the press in which he said that it was no use holding a conference in a vacuum or discussing things without any specific date. The reaction in the nationalist press was bitter and in a furious campaign he was called a monster, a traitor and a hireling. On the eve of the conference he issued another statement. He observed :

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[23] Keer, op. cit., p. 198.

[24] Kharat, S. R., *Muktisangram*, p. 59.

[25] Desai, Mahadeo, *Diary*, p. 33.

[26] Tendulkar, D. G., *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 210.

> "It would have been justifiable if Mr Gandhi had resorted to this extreme step for obtaining independence for the country on which he was so insistent all through the Round Table Conference debates...It is also a painful surprise that Mr Gandhi should have singled out special representation of the depressed classes in the Communal Award as an excuse for his selfimmolation...The Mahatma is not an immortal person, nor the Congress...Mahatmas have come and mahatmas have gone. But the untouchables have remained as untouchables."[27]

Ambedkar with other Hindu leaders saw Gandhiji in Yeravada Prison. Gandhiji suggested the application of the panel system to all the seats. Ambedkar accepted Gandhiji's suggestion. Ambedkar demanded 197 seats for depressed classes in provincial assemblies and the leaders reduced the number to 126. He said that the system of primary election should terminate at the end of ten years; but he insisted that the question of reserved seats should be settled by referendum of the depressed classes at the end of another fifteen years. The question of the total number of seats was decided by granting 148 seats to the depressed classes in the provincial assemblies and it was also decided that 10 per cent of the seats of the Hindus from British India in the Central Assembly should be given to the depressed classes. Devdas Gandhi made a strong personal appeal to Ambedkar not to hold up an agreement by pressing for a referendum.

"Mahatmaji, you must come to our rescue", said Ambedkar, "some of these friends are opposing our demand for a referendum at the end of the stated period...We are very keen on having it." With a finality Gandhiji said : "Five years or my life."[28] Ambedkar said that he was not prepared to yield on the point of the period of referendum which should

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27. Keer, op. cit., pp. 207-8.
28. Tendulkar, op. cit., p. 210.

be not less than 10 years. Gandhiji gave his consent. The agreement was signed at 5 p.m. on Saturday, 24 September, and it went down in history as the Poona Pact. Ambedkar signed it on behalf of depressed classes. In a meeting held in Bombay to ratify the Poona Pact Ambedkar said : "My only regret is why did not Mahatmaji take this attitude at the Round Table Conference? If he had shown the same consideration to my point of view then, it would not have been necessary for him to go through this ordeal."[29] The Poona Pact was accepted by the British government thereby nullifying the Communal Award of MacDonald much to Gandhiji's satisfaction.

The reactions of Ambedkar about the Poona Pact were very bitter. He expressed that there existed a conspiracy by the Hindus to make the Poona Pact of no benefit to the depressed classes.[30] He said further : "The second vote given by the Communal Award was a priceless privilege... No caste Hindu candidate could have dared to neglect the untouchable in his constituency or be hostile to their interest if he was made dependent upon the votes of the untouchables."[31]

The Congress leaders contested the depressed class seats by means of false leaders though sacred promises were given at the time of the Poona Pact. This betrayal embittered Ambedkar so much that he supported the Muslim League in celebrating the "Salvation day" when Congress ministries resigned in November 1939.

The Poona Pact and its system of voting were at the root of the defeat of scheduled caste candidates in general elections. Considering all these consequences, the executive of the Scheduled Castes Federation in its resolution on 23 September 1944 demanded separate electorates for the depressed classes. This resolution was initiated by Ambedkar.[32] In an interview he stated : "The Poona Pact must go. It has resulted in disenfranchising 60 million untouchables. According to international law no treaty was final and sacrosanct."[33]

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[29] Pyarelal, *Epic Fast*, p. 189.

[30] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 91.

[31] Sapru Committee Report, p. 220.

[32] *Dalitbandhu*, Special Number, p. 27.

[33] *The Times of India*, 22 July 1946.

Ambedkar was convinced that his failure in 1952 general election was due to joint electorates.[34] In a speech in Rajya Sabha on 22 September 1953 he expressed that he accepted the Poona Pact as inevitable, because it was not possible for him to get more. Concluding the whole controversy he said : "The Poona Pact gave a death-blow to the selfreliant movements of the depressed classes."[35] Even the Cabinet Mission deliberations were disappointing to Ambedkar. He contended that the Congress did not represent the untouchables and demanded the abrogation of the Poona Pact signed by himself and Gandhiji and demanded the restoration of separate electorates as envisaged in MacDonald's Communal Award.[36]

In a memorandum submitted to the Governor-General on 29 October 1942, Ambedkar put forth "political, educational and other grievances". He complained about inadequate representation of the depressed classes in the central legislature and in the central executive, and absence of representation in public services and in the Federal Services Commission. In the services, fixed proportion of the annual vacancies was not maintained in respect of the depressed classes. The reason, according to him, was that the appointing authorities were caste Hindus. In a cabinet of 15, there was only one member of scheduled castes while the Muslims had three members. He suggested some remedies : scheduled castes must be declared a minority; their proportion in the annual vacancies must be fixed; the age bar must be raised; examination fees must be reduced and scheduled caste officers must be appointed to see whether the provisions had been carried through.[37]

The demand for a constituent assembly elected by the people of India was affirmed from time to time by political leaders. The failure of the Round Table Conference in England convinced the Indians that the constitution of India must be framed by the Indians through a sovereign constituent assembly. In the year 1934 the Swarajya Party adopted a resolution claiming for

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34. Kharat, op. cit., p. 76.
35. Ibid., p. 146.
36. *Bombay Chronicle*, 7 November 1946.
37. Bombay University Ambedkar Collections, Confidential Pamphlet, p. 56.

India the right of selfdetermination, and it was declared that the only method of applying that principle was "to convene a constituent assembly, representative of all sections of the Indian people to frame an acceptable constitution".[38] In May 1934 the All-India Congress Committee approved of the policy embodied in that resolution. In December 1936, it was declared by the Congress at its Faizpur session that a genuine democratic state of India with its political power transferred to the people as a whole could only come through a constituent assembly elected by adult suffrage and invested with the power to frame the constitution of the country. In November 1939, it was declared by the Working Committee of the Congress that the recognition of the independence of India and of the right of the people to frame its constitution through a constituent assembly were essential in order to remove the "taint of imperialism from Britain's policy" and to enable the Congress to consider the question of cooperation with the British government (in the second world war). It was held that the constituent assembly was the only "democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country" and an "adequate instrument" for solving communal and other problems. According to the committee, ·the constituent assembly of India should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage and that the existing separate electorates should be retained for such minorities as desired them.[39]

Gandhiji also supported the idea of a constituent assembly.[40] Sir Maurice Gwyer and Prof Reginald Coupland emphasised the desirability of having a small-size constitution-making body. After the adoption of the Lahore resolution in March 1940, the attitude of the Muslim League seemed to have undergone a change in favour of the idea of a constituent assembly. But it demanded two constituent assemblies in accordance with its demand for two separate states in the country. A demand for constituent assembly was already made by Congress. The Cripps Proposals also contained the same. The Sapru Committee also upheld it. But Ambedkar opposed this demand and regarded it as a most dangerous project which might involve this country in a civil war. According to him, the communal question should not be a part of the constituent assembly. He remarked :

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[38] *Indian Annual Register,* 1934, p. 279.

[39] Ibid., 1939, II, p. 238.

[40] *Harijan,* 25 November 1939.

> "According to the conception of constituent assembly suggested by the Sapru Committee, the total membership will be 160. The election is by joint electorates by members of the provincial legislative assemblies. Under a system of proportional representation and the decision is to be by 3/4ths of the members present and voting, can a minority accept this constituent assembly as a safe body in the impartiality of which it can place implicit confidence?"[41]

Ambedkar was interviewed as the leader of the Scheduled Castes Federation on 5 April 1946 by the Cabinet Mission. In his statement Ambedkar opposed the idea of constituent assembly as he feared it would be dominated by the caste Hindus, and if scheduled castes joined it they would be no more than a small minority which would always be outvoted.

The communal question was the stumbling block in the way to swaraj. According to Ambedkar, the question must be solved not by the policy of appeasement but by the adoption of some definite principles. He continued :

> "The approach to the communal problem is, therefore, based upon two considerations : (1) that in proceeding to solve the communal problem it is essential to define the governing principles which should be invoked for determining the final solution, and (2) that whatever the governing principles they must be applied to all parties equally without fear or fervour."[42]

To him the majority in India was a communal majority, and not a political majority. He proposed that the Prime Minister and the members of the cabinet from the majority community should be elected by the whole house by a single transferable vote and that the representatives of the different minorities in the cabinet should be elected by a single transferable vote of the members of each minority community in the legislature.

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[41] AISCF, Manifesto, 6 May 1945.
[42] Ibid.

The announcement which was made by the Viceroy on behalf of the British government on 8 August 1940 came to be known as the August Offer. Its object was declared to be the early achievement of that unity of national purpose in India "as would enable her to make the fullest possible contribution in the world struggle against tyranny and aggression".[43] The objective was to grant India dominion status and free and equal partnership in the British commonwealth. It suggested that other constitutional issues were to be solved after the termination of the war. Gandhiji and Congress opposed but Savarkar supported this August Offer. Rajaji remarked that it was a sporting offer, and it might promote an agreement with the Muslim League. According to Rajaji, if the Congress had formed the ministries, the political situation would have been changed immensely to the advantage of the Congress. The scheduled class organisation under the leadership of Ambedkar declared its willingness to accept the offer.[44]

Cripps, a member of the British war cabinet, came to India on 22 March 1942. He had with him some proposals from the British cabinet. The immediate object of the Cripps Mission was to secure full Indian cooperation in the war-efforts. According to Cripps Proposals, a constituent assembly was to be convened immediately after the cessation of hostilities. It was to draft the constitution in cooperation with the Indian states, but the right of joining or staying out of the Indian union was given to provinces and the constituent assembly was to enter into a treaty with the British government. Gandhiji described the Cripps offer as a "postdated cheque". Other parties also opposed the proposals.

Ambedkar accompanied by M. C. Rajah interviewed Cripps on 30 March. He rejected the scheme for its failure to promote the necessary safeguards for depressed classes. He said : "We are absolutely convinced that the proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the depressed classes and are sure to place them under an unmitigated system of Hindu rule."[45] The depressed class leaders asked Sir Stafford Cripps to convey to the British government that the depressed classes would look upon it as a breach of faith if that government decided to force upon them a constitution to which they did not give their consent.[46] In another statement he described the attitude of the British government to the depressed classes as a Munich mentality, the essence of which was to save oneself by sacrificing others. He further stated that the Cripps Proposals had distinctly given to the League the right to create Pakistan.

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[43] Menon, op. cit., p. 95.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 126.

Cripps asked Ambedkar whether he represented labour or the depressed classes, and asked him about the strength of his party. That gave a turn to his role. He convened a conference of depressed class leaders on 30 and 31 March 1942, and decided to hold an All-India Depressed Classes Conference in July 1942. In that conference he described the Cripps Proposals as a great betrayal of the depressed classes and added that they were "determined to resist any such catastrophe befalling our people with all the means at our command".[47]

Ambedkar described the proposals as a surrender of the minorities to the majority. By upholding the demand for constituent assembly by the Congress and by conceding substance of Pakistan, the proposals were cajoling them; on the contrary, they have tied down the hands and feet of untouchables and thrown them at the doors of Hindus.[48] He reviewed the proposals of 14 August 1940, 8 August 1941, and showed that they had agreed to the rights of untouchables, but the Cripps Proposals betrayed them. They widened the gulf between the government and political parties.

The Cripps offer was rejected by the Congress mainly because no vital change in the system of government was contemplated by it during the interim period nor did it meet the demand for the immediate establishment of a national government. The Muslim League rejected the offer because its demand for Pakistan was not met by it. The offer was not accepted by the Hindu Mahasabha because according to it the offer, if accepted, would destroy the unity of India. The Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, demanded immediate abdication of British authority in India. On 8 August 1942, the famous "Quit India" resolution was passed by the Congress, and on the next day Congress leaders were arrested and the Congress organisation was banned.

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[46] Keer, op. cit., p. 340.

[47] Sapru Committee Report, p. 67.

[48] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, pp. 208-11.

Rajaji managed to get two resolutions passed by the Congress members in Madras legislature, in April 1942: (1) recommendation to the AICC that Congress should acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation, and negotiations with the Muslim League should be undertaken for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of a national government to meet the emergency and (2) proposals for the restoration of responsible government in Madras. These resolutions were opposed by the AICC. Congress repudiated Rajaji. After detaching himself from the Congress, Rajaji was ploughing a lonely furrow.

The standing committee of the Non-Party Conference which met on 18 and 19 November 1944 in New Delhi adopted a resolution deciding to appoint a committee. On 3 December 1944, Sir T. B. Sapru announced the names of the members of his "conciliation committee". Among the members Ambedkar was inclined at first to cooperate but later withdrew as he disliked the composition of the committee. He complained that the members of the committee did not inspire confidence. He showed his willingness to cooperate with the committee if its personnel were reconsidered. He did not cooperate with the committee. The committee remarked : "We have tried to make up this deficiency by studying his writings and speeches on the scheduled castes."[49] He suggested that the scheduled caste candidates who would get at least 30 or 40 per cent votes must be regarded as eligible to stand as candidates in the general elections.[50]

Lord Wavell broadcast his proposals on 14 June 1945. His intention was to hold a conference of Indian leaders at Simla. The purpose of the conference was "to take counsel" in the

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49. Sapru Committee Report, p. 216.
50. Ibid, p. 231.

formation of a new executive council. It was to be an entirely Indian council representing the main communities in India having "equal proportion of caste Hindus and Muslims" to work under the existing constitution. The formation of the interim government was in no way to prejudice the final constitutional settlement. The intention of the government was to convene as soon as possible a constitution-making body. The Viceroy was authorised by the British government to take steps to bring into being an executive council with the support of the main parties in India.

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, flew to London in March 1945 to discuss the party proposals contained in the pact made between Bhulabhai Desai and Liaqat Ali Khan. The pact was later supported by the Sapru Committee whose findings were cabled to Lord Wavell in London. Lord Wavell returned to India in the first week of June with the "Wavell Plan". He released the Congress leaders from jails and convened a conference at Simla on 25 June 1945.

Ambedkar, being a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, could not take part in it. But he was preparing the case for the scheduled castes. Sivaraj who attended the conference confirmed the objection of the scheduled castes to the grant to Muslims of parity with caste Hindus, without regard to the rights of other minorities. He thought that parity in the executive council might lead to Muslim claims for parity in the services and in the Indian army.

Jinnah said that Sivaraj had misinterpreted the suggestion made in 1940. At that time, there was no definite mention of the scheduled castes or of any minority other than Muslims.[51] Sivaraj objected to the Congress claim to nominate representatives of the scheduled castes. He said that they represented a separate element in the national life of India and had been recognised as such. He would not press for parity but would insist that the number of scheduled caste members should bear the same ratio to their population as the Muslim members bore to theirs.[52] He said further that the British were wrong in recognising only two major parties. The sixty millions of the scheduled castes were a major element in the population and should be treated as such in any further attempt at a settlement. The Simla conference afforded a last opportunity to the forces of nationalism to fight a rear-guard action to preserve the integrity of the country, and when the battle was lost the waves of communalism quickly engulfed it.[53]

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[51] Menon, op. cit., p. 200.
[52] Ibid., p. 204.

Two important events turned the tide in favour of the Indian nationalist movement. One was the trial of the Indian National Army prisoners in the months of November and December 1945 at the Red Fort in Delhi, which materially contributed to the growth of hatred, suspicion and conflict between the Indians and the British government; the other was widespread strike by the Royal Indian Navy in Bombay. That political subjection of India could not be continued any longer became obvious.

The British Premier sent out a delegation of three cabinet ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, A. V. Alexander and Lord Pethick-Lawrence who was then the Secretary of State for India, to discuss with Indian party leaders on the spot the question of resolving the political deadlock in India. The Cabinet Mission arrived in New Delhi on 24 March 1946. The mission had no concrete proposals to place before the leaders and the talks were of a general and exploratory nature. The mission could not obtain an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League on the question of future constitution of India.

The Congress was opposed to any executive or legislative machinery for a group of provinces or units of the federation. The Congress was also opposed to parity of representation as between groups of provinces—one for Pakistan and the other group consisting of the remaining provinces. The League demanded parity of representation between the two groups of provinces in the union executive and legislature. The conference failed to achieve its objectives and broke up on 12 May 1946.

The object of the mission was, it was stated, not to lay down the details of a constitution but to set up a constituent assembly—a machinery whereby a constitution could be framed by Indians for Indians. The mission recognised only three main communities in India—general, Muslim and Sikh.

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[53] Ibid., p. 212.

The Council of the All-India Muslim League accepted the scheme embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Mission. But at the same time the council reiterated that "the attainment of the goal of a complete sovereign Pakistan" still remained the "unalterable objective of the Muslims in India".

The Congress was opposed to "parity" in any form. Jinnah, on the other hand, insisted on the parity of representation in the interim government. The Viceroy in concurrence with the Cabinet Mission put forward a proposal for an interim government consisting of 14 members of whom six were to come from the Congress including a scheduled class member, five from the Muslim League, one Sikh, one Parsi and one Indian Christian. The proposal was more in the nature of an award than a recommendation. Pandit Nehru asserted that the Congress had agreed only to join the constituent assembly. The League decided to stay out of the interim government. The new government took office on 2 September 1946. There was an exchange of letters between the Viceroy and Jinnah and, on 13 September 1946, Jinnah informed the Viceroy of the intention of the Muslim League to join the interim government. It was hoped at the time when the Muslim League joined the interim government that it would join the constituent assembly. But shortly after the representatives of Muslim League had joined the interim government, Jinnah declared that the League adhered to its demand for Pakistan and two constituent assemblies.

Ambedkar's own proposal was that the tasks envisaged for the constituent assembly should be divided into two classes, namely, (a) constitutional questions properly so called, e.g. the relations between the legislature and the executive and their respective composition and functions, and (b) communal questions. Matters under (a) should be referred to a commission presided over by an eminent constitutional lawyer from Great Britain or the USA. The other members should be two Indian experts and one representative each of the Hindu and Muslim communities. The terms of reference should be the Government of India Act, 1935, and the commission should be required to recommend what changes should be made in the act as it stood. Matters under (b) should be referred to a conference of the leaders of the different communities. If the conference failed to arrive at an agreed solution, the British government should give an award. He claimed that before they left, the British must ensure that the new constitution guaranteed to the scheduled castes the elementary human rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and that it restored their separate electorates and gave them the other safeguards which they demanded. He reiterated that so long as there were joint electorates, scheduled caste voters would be so few that Hindu candidates could safely ignore their wishes. Caste Hindus would never support scheduled caste candidates. Separate electorates were fundamental; without them the scheduled castes would never have their own representatives.[54]

Jagjivan Ram, Congress Harijan leader, added that they were opposed to Ambedkar's claims to represent the scheduled caste people and said that they had submitted statistics to show the defeat of Ambedkar's followers in the recent elections.

The statement of the mission was published on 16 May 1946. Immediately Ambedkar issued a statement. In it he said that the untouchables were completely ignored as they had no right to nominate their representative in the central executive, there was no fixed quota of representation and no right to separate representation in the constituent assembly. The Cabinet Mission's decisions constituted a departure from established policy of the British government. The recognition of untouchables in the RTC and the Communal Award was taken away. Assurances in Lord Linlithgow's speeches in January and August 1940, and in the speeches of Amery and Wavell have been turned down. He said that the mission's formula was a mere copy of Gandhiji's formula : not to recognise untouchables as a distinct force. In this context he stressed that the results of the primary elections must be taken into consideration but not taken as final. The fact was that 28 per cent of the votes polled in the primary elections were cast in favour of the Congress and 72 per cent against it. He opposed the suggestion of appointing an advisory body; because he stressed like constituent assembly it would be dominated by caste Hindus. Lastly he wanted to press the British government (1) to declare that they regarded the untouchables as a minority; (2) to declare whether the British government would institute machinery, and if so, of what sort, to examine whether the safeguards for minorities, framed by the constituent assembly, were adequate and real; and (3) to declare if they would insist upon the constitution framed by the constituent assembly containing clauses circumscribing the power of the future Indian legislature to do away with minority safeguards by bare majority.[55] Lord Pethick-Lawrence referred to the depressed classes led by Ambedkar and said that they would have very full representation through the Congress-affiliated organisation. The mission had interviewed the leaders of the Congress organisation and was convinced of their genuine desire to help the depressed classes. It was another matter on which the advisory committee on minorities might reach some solution and he hoped that the committee would be generous in their allocation of seats to minorities.

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[54] Ibid., pp. 243-44.

The members of the mission argued that Ambedkar's following was confined to the scheduled castes in the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces only. Afterwards Ambedkar showed that mission's statement was falsified by his election to the constituent assembly from Bengal. He claimed that his party had all-India support. He finally remarked that scheduled castes fell a victim to the machinations of the government.[56]

In August 1946 Ambedkar and V. Sivraj went to London and explained to Attlee how the Cabinet Mission has trampled under feet the assurances given by the government to the scheduled castes.

SECTION 2—PROBLEMS OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION

A constitution, according to Ambedkar, was "merely a mechanism for the purpose of regulating the work of the various organs of the state", and "a mechanism whereby particular members of particular parties are installed in office". The constitution should not "tie down" the people of the country to live in a particular type of society. He raised such fundamental problems as the policy of the state, the social and economic organisation of society, and the adoption of new policies by the people in consonance with the needs of the changing times. According to him, all these matters should not be laid down in the constitution itself; because that would be "destroying democracy altogether". If it was stated in the constitution, he added, that the social organisation of the state should take a particular form, that would take away the liberty of the people to decide what should be the social organisation in which they might wish to live.

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[55] Bombay University Ambedkar Collections.

[56] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 226.

Ambedkar was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India by the members of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly though he was defeated in Bombay. He was elected on the Drafting Committee and later appointed its chairman. The other members being N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K. M. Munshi, Sir Muhammad Sadulla, N. Madhav Menon and D. P. Khaitan, with B. N. Rau as the constitutional adviser.

The Constituent Assembly first met on 9 December 1946. On 15 August 1947, it became the Sovereign Constituent Assembly of free India. The first draft of the constitution was presented on 4 November 1948, and the final constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949. During the long period of more than three years, the course took different turns. Ambedkar, as chairman of the Drafting Committee, piloted it. He did his job confidently. But for that the backing of a strong united party was necessary. The Congress Party was praised by him for this job. He said that the Congress Party inside the Assembly brought into its proceedings a sense of order and discipline. He gave all the credit to the Congress Party for the smooth sailing of the constitution in the Assembly.[57]

Ambedkar's tribute to the Congress Party was a calculated one. He was a relentless opponent and an uncompromising critic of the Indian National Congress in its policies towards his community. In the opening session of the Assembly he was one of the very few who opposed the Objectives Resolution moved by Nehru. But subsequent developments culminating in the partition of the country made him realise that political realism demanded a moderate attitude on his part towards those who had in their hands effective political power. The Congress leaders responded to this gesture so generously that they elected him the chairman of the Drafting Committee.

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[57] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. XI, p. 974.

Ambedkar's main objective in entering the Constituent Assembly was to safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes.[58] He said that he had not the ambition of drafting the constitution.[59] He was surprised when he was elected on the Drafting Committee and moreover its chairman. On another occasion he urged his followers to look to the welfare of their community, and not to lose sight of their duty towards the preservation of our independence and told them that "the course of political events is changed now".[60]

It was charged in the Constituent Assembly that the Draft Constitution was a copy of the Government of India Act 1935. Ambedkar replied : "There is nothing to be ashamed of in borrowing. It involves no plagiarism."[61] He explained that the problem in 1935 was a redistribution of the powers of the British government in India to reconcile the Indian demand for full selfgovernment, and the British determination was to keep India under their control. That act was full of compromises. It was implemented in 1937. It was suitably modified to become the Constitution of the Dominion of India between 15 August 1947 and 26 January 1950. In his opinion to appoint a constituent assembly was superfluous. All that was necessary was to delete those sections of the Government of India Act which were inconsistent with dominion status. The only work in the Constituent Assembly was to find out the solution of the communal problem.[62] As regards the residuary powers, he remarked that

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58. Ibid., p. 973.
59. Keer, op. cit., p. 615.
60. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad,* p. 289.
61. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 38.
62. AISCF Manifesto, 1945.

the provision contained in the present Government of India Act, 1935, could be adopted as the best compromise.

According to Ambedkar, constitutional morality was not a natural sentiment. It had to be cultivated. He explained the close relation between the forms of administration and the forms of the constitution. The legislature should not be trusted to prescribe the forms of administration. There was a possibility of perverting the constitution without changing the form of administration and to make it inconsistent and opposed to the spirit of the constitution. He, therefore, justified that the forms of administration must be incorporated in the constitution.[63]

A criticism was levelled by many speakers that this constituent body was not elected on adult suffrage, and hence could not be taken as a representative body. Ambedkar replied to this charge in clear terms. He said that it was quite true that it was not a constituent assembly in the sense that it included every adult male and female in this country. The point under debate was: "Does this constitution or does it not acknowledge, recognise and proclaim that it emanates from the people? I say it does."[64]

In this connection, he cited instances from American history. In the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States of America, it is stated: "We, the people of United States of America do ordain and establish the Constitution for the USA." In fact, the American Constitution was drafted by a very small body. There were only 13 states. Ambedkar vigorously pleaded the case of Indian Constituent Assembly, he said:

> "If the representatives of 13 states assembled in a conference in Philadelphia could pass a constitution and say that what they did was in the name of the people, on their authority, basing it on their sovereignty, I personally myself do not understand, unless a man was an absolute pedant, that a body of people, 292 in number, representing this vast continent in their representative capacity, could not say that they are acting in the name of the people of the country."[65]

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[63] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 38.

[64] Ibid., p. 455.

[65] Ibid.

Ambedkar remarked that Indian sovereignty did not derive from the sovereignty of the British Parliament. In this connection, some members expressed fear that as the Constituent Assembly had declared in 1949 that India would associate with the commonwealth, it would amount to a derogation of the sovereignty of the people. To these critics Ambedkar replied, "Because one sovereign country makes a treaty with another sovereign country, that country does not become less sovereign on that account."[66] Loknath Misra said : "I remember to have heard Dr Ambedkar, while he was speaking somewhere that this sovereignty rests with the government of India; and I want to make a difference between the government of India and the people of India." Ambedkar promptly replied : "Beyond doubt, the sovereignty vests with the people."[67]

The Preamble of the constitution was rightly observed by Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar as "mainly founded on the Objectives Resolution" adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 22 January 1947. The Preamble indicated the source from which our constitution derived its authority and also stated the objects which our constitution sought to promote. The Preamble has no particular significance from the legal point of view. It has no operational effect. It has a value much more than formal words. It states "the great objectives which the constitution and the governments established by it are expected to promote."[68] Professor Barker remarked: "I am proud that the people of India should begin their independent life by subscribing to the principles of a political tradition which we in the West call Western, but which is now something more than Western." A demand was made that the Preamble should straightaway declare that the sovereignty belonged to the people. Ambedkar opposed it on the ground that it was implied in the words "we, the people of India".

The most important aspect of the constitutional provisions dealing with citizenship was that it had established a uniform or single system of citizenship law for the whole country. This

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66. Ibid., p. 456.
67. Ibid., p. 420.
68. Rao, K. V., *Parliamentary Democracy of India*, p. 306.

was in striking contrast to the system of double citizenship prevailing in some federal states. Ambedkar said:

> "In all the dominion countries, the residents would be divided into three categories. Citizens, aliens and a third category of what may be called dominion residents residing in a particular country. All that would mean is this, that the citizens of the dominions residing in India would not be treated as aliens, they would have some rights which aliens would not have, but they would certainly not be entitled, in any judgement, to get the full rights of citizenship which we could be giving to the people of our country."[69]

Federalism was one of the most important aspects of modern constitutionalism. The basic objective of federalism was unity in diversity, devolution in authority and decentralisation in administration. It formed one of the foundations of constitutional government in India.

Ambedkar, while moving the Draft Constitution in the Constituent Assembly said that the form of the constitution was federal. He remarked that it established a dual polity with the union at the centre and the states at the periphery, each endowed with sovereign powers to be exercised in the fields assigned to them respectively by the constitution. The union was not a league of states, united in a loose relationship, nor were the states other agencies of the union deriving powers from it. Both the union and the states were created by the constitution, both derived their respective authority from the constitution. The one was not subordinate to the other in its own field, the authority of one was coordinate with that of the other.

Ambedkar was not opposed to federalism. His main point was that the centre should not make an invasion on the powers of the constituent units. In the USA the constitutions of the federal and state governments were loosely connected. In Indian Constitution no state had a right to frame its own constitution. The chief mark of federalism based on a balance (of powers) lay in the partition of the legislative and executive authority between the centre and units. He said that the Indian federation was not a league of states nor are the states administrative units or agencies of the union government.[70] His view of federal states attached great importance to institutional means for the solution of human affairs. His concept of federalism meant that the state was a federation in normalcy, but unitary in emergency. To him, the words "Indian Union" indicated two things, viz that the Indian federation was not the result of an agreement by the units, and that the competent units have no freedom to secede from it. He differed from Prof M. Venkatarangaiya, K. C. Wheare, Patrick Bausome, W. H. Moore, and A. V. Dicey. To them, federalism was essentially a contract and being a contract federation required that the parties to it were independent. According to him, federation was not confederation. It avoided extremes in the political life of this country and thus paved the way for emotional integration and national unity.

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[69] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VIII, p. 574.

According to Ambedkar, all federal systems are placed "in a tight mould" of federalism; it cannot change its form and shape. It can never be unitary. On the other hand, Indian Constitution can be both unitary as well as federal according to requirements of time and circumstances. In normal times it worked as a federal system. But in times of emergency it can be worked as though it was a unitary system. He said that under article 257 the President had such a power of converting federal into a unitary state which no federation possessed.[71]

Ambedkar mentioned two weaknesses of federal system—rigidity and legalism. He remarked that these faults of a federal constitution have been found in a pronounced form in the Constitution of the USA. Like the Australian Constitution, our constitution had a long list of subjects for concurrent powers of legislation. Australia had 39 subjects, while India had 37 subjects. The biggest advance was in the matter of exclusive powers of legislation vested in Parliament. He described the two ways of overcoming rigidity and legalism in the Constitution. The two ways were: Implementation of articles 256, 257 and the procedure of the amendment to the constitution. According to him, "the distinguishing feature of the constitution is that it is a *flexible federation*". As regards the judiciary in a federa-

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70. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 33.
71. Ibid., p. 35.

tion, he remarked that in the USA the federal judiciary and the state judiciary were separate and independent of each other. The Indian federation though a dual polity had no dual judiciary at all. Canada was the only country which furnished a close parallel to the Indian judiciary.[72]

Ambedkar distinguished between "federation" and "union". The Drafting Committee made it clear that though India was to be a federation, the federation was not the result of an agreement by the states to join in a federation and hence no state had the right to secede from it. The federation was a union because it was indestructible.[73] He further clarified the balance in the federal provisions, and resisted the tendency to make it stronger. But he wanted the centre to be stronger than that envisaged by the Government of India Act of 1935.[74]

Criticism was made by many eminent members that in Indian Constitution the centre had been made more strong. Ambedkar remarked that the complaint about centralisation and reduction of the states to municipalities is founded on a misunderstanding. He said that the basic principle of federalism was that the legislative and the executive authority was partitioned between the centre and the states not by any law to be made by the centre but by the constitution itself.

Justifying the provisions for a strong central authority, Ambedkar said that it was difficult to prevent the centre from becoming strong, because the conditions of the world were such that centralism of powers was inevitable. He referred to the Constitution of the United States of America and remarked that, notwithstanding the very limited powers given to the federal government by the constitution, the federal government had "outgrown its former self" and had "overshadowed and eclipsed" the governments and the states. He admitted the charge that power had been given to the centre to override the states. But he tried to defend the provisions. According to him, the overriding powers were not the normal features of the constitution. Their use and operation were expressly confined to emergencies only. He said that the residual loyalty of the citizen in an emergency

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72. Ibid., p. 35-37.
73. Ibid., p. 43.
74. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 99.

must lie to the centre, and not to the constituent states. "For it is only the centre which can work for a common end and for the general interests of the country as a whole."[75] As regards the criticism of overcentralisation he said that the constitution assigned to the centre a larger field for the operation of its legislative and executive authority than was to be found in any other federal constitution. Students of federalism in India who had derived their ideas largely from Dicey were naturally perturbed by the centralisation in the Indian Constitution. Justifying this aspect of the constitution he maintained that it did not destroy the federal principle.

The problem of fundamental rights assumed extreme difficulty under a democratic system of government. For the success or failure of a democracy depended largely on the extent to which civil liberties were enjoyed by the citizens in general. The incorporation of a list of fundamental rights in the constitution and their guaranteed inviolability by executive and legislative authorities were the most important thing.

In the discussion many criticis expressed their opinion that the fundamental rights were not fundamental, unless they were also absolute rights. It is said that the fundamental rights in the American Bill of Rights were real because they were not subject to limitations or exceptions. Ambedkar remarked: "It is incorrect to say that fundamental rights are absolute while nonfundamental rights are not absolute. The real distinction between the two is that nonfundamental rights are created by agreement between parties while fundamental rights are the gifts of the law."[76]

The Constituent Assembly of India made detailed provisions regarding fundamental rights in our constitution, unlike those in the Constitution of the United States of America. According to him, this was necessary because of the peculiar social and economic conditions of the people of India. In this connection he referred to the provisions regarding abolition of untouchability, backward classes, prohibition of discrimination on grounds only of religion, caste, race, etc. He maintained that the Constituent Assembly struck a balance between the British theory of legisla-

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75. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 42.
76. Ibid., p. 40.

tive supremacy and evolved a principle of its own combining the elements of both legislative supremacy and judicial supremacy. He regarded the twofold object of fundamental rights. One was that every citizen must be in a position to claim those rights, and the second was that they must be binding upon every authority created by law which had certain power to make laws, to make rules, or to make bylaws. Of all the rights he regarded equality of opportunity for all citizens as the most important right.[77]

K. T. Shah tabled an amendment to the first article. It said: "India shall be a secular federal socialist union of states."[78] Ambedkar opposed the amendment. He was of opinion that the constitution should not tie down the people to live in a particular form; because it was merely a mechanism for the purpose of regulating the work of various organs of the state. It cannot be laid down in the constitution itself; because it was destroying democracy altogether. He remarked: "If you state in the constitution that the social organisation of the state shall take a particular form, you are in my judgement taking away the liberty of the people to decide what should be the social organisation in which they wish to live."[79] He said that the amendment was superfluous. Because both the legislature as well as the executive have been placed by this constitution under certain definite obligations as to the form of their policy. He remarked: "If these directive principles to which I have drawn attention are not socialistic in their direction and in their content, I fail to understand what more socialism can be... socialist principles are already embodied in our constitution."[80]

Ambedkar claimed no special rights for the press because they were not to be given rights which were not to be exercised by the citizen in his individual capacity. He said that no special mention was necessary of the freedom of the press at all.[81] As regards the rights to bear arms, he insisted not on the right of an individual to bear arms but his duty to bear arms. He said that

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77. Ibid., p. 701.
78. Ibid., p. 400.
79. Ibid., p. 709.
80. Ibid., pp. 402-03.
81. Ibid., pp. 779-80.

in emergency military service must be imposed if the right to bear arms was conceded.

In our society religion had been given vast expansive jurisdiction so as to cover the whole of life and to prevent the legislature from encroaching upon that field. According to Ambedkar, it was not necessary that the sort of laws, for instance laws relating to tenancy or relating to succession, should be governed by religion. He said further, "We are having this liberty in order to reform our social system, which is full of inequities, so full of inequalities, discriminations and other things, which conflict with our fundamental rights."[82]

Ambedkar while enunciating Article 21 said that we have accepted the proposition that the public funds raised by taxes should not be utilised for the benefit of any particular community. He made it clear that the state funds should not be used for the purpose of religious instruction irrespective of the question whether the religious instruction was given by the state or by anybody. In the course of his speech he remarked that the religions which prevailed in this country were not merely non-social, so far as their mutual relations were concerned, but they were antisocial. The religious instruction had been left free to be taught and given by each community according to its aims and objects. Lastly, he distinguished religious instruction from research or study, i.e. dogma different from study.[83]

Prof Saksena remarked that any change in the fundamental rights should be made by Parliament and not by the state during emergency. Ambedkar replied: "...under normal circumstances, the authority to make laws affecting fundamental rights is vested in both and, there is no reason why, for instance, this normal right which the state possesses should be taken away during emergency."[84] He put the question bluntly: Whether the power to suspend the rights should be vested absolutely in the President or whether they should be determined by Parliament? He made it clear that in England, it was not open to the executive to suspend the right of habeas corpus. In the USA, while the power was left with the Congress, the President was also vested with what may be called the ad interim power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. He again told the house that India has followed the American precedent. Indian Constitution possessed a further safeguard: Indian President would be guided by the advice of the executive and the executive should be subject to the authority of Parliament.

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[82] Ibid., p. 781.

[83] Ibid., pp. 884-85.

[84] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 185.

The right to constitutional remedies is guaranteed in our constitution. This was in tune with the nature in general of the various provisions embodied in the chapter on fundamental rights. Ambedkar defended these provisions and preferred the British method of dealing with rights. British jurisprudence insisted that there could be no right unless the constitution provided a remedy that made the right real.[85] He emphasised the article on constitutional remedies, and characterised it as the very soul of the constitution and the very heart of it. The constitution has invested the Supreme Court with these rights and these rights could not be taken away unless and until the constitution itself is amended by means left open to the legislatures. This was one of the greatest safeguards that can be provided for the safety and security of the individual.

The provision for the suspension of the right to constitutional remedies was severely criticised by some members in the Constituent Assembly. But Ambedkar had convincing arguments for the inclusion of such an apparently undemocratic provision. He said:

> "There can be no doubt that while there are certain fundamental rights which the state must guarantee to the individual in order that the individual may have some security and freedom to develop his own personality, it is equally clear that in certain cases, where, for instance, the state's very life is in jeopardy, those rights must be subject to a certain amount of limitation."[86]

Article 22 guaranteed three rights: first it guaranteed the right of every person, who is arrested, to be informed of the cause of his arrest; secondly, his right to consult and to be defended by a lawyer of his choice; thirdly, every person arrested and detained in custody should be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours and should be kept in continued custody only with his authority. All these rights are without any qualifications and are, therefore, in absolute terms.[87]

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[85] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 953.

[86] Ibid., p. 950.

Bakshi Tek Chand asked: "...is there any written constitution in the world in which there is provision for detention of persons without trial in this manner in normal times?" In reply, Ambedkar laid emphasis on the special safeguards embodied in the constitution even when a person was arrested and detained under a preventive detention law. He established the fact that if constitutional methods were followed, then there would be no necessity of preventive detention. If people of other parties who were impatient to capture power resorted to unconstitutional methods, then the executive might detain such people. In such a situation it was not practicable to satisfy all the elaborate legal procedure.[88] He clearly indicated that preventive detention and other features were specially intended against the antisocial elements and said: "...the exigency of the liberty of the individual should be placed above the interests of the state".[89]

The term minority was used in Article 18 of the fundamental rights not in the technical sense of the word "minority", as it was used for the purpose of certain political safeguards. It was used to cover minorities, which were not minorities in the technical sense, but which were nonetheless minorities in the cultural and linguistic sense.

Ambedkar clarified that the articles regarding minorities (29 & 30), intended to give protection in the matter of culture, language and script not only to a minority technically but also to a minority in the wider sense of the term.[90] He said that minorities have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which was basically a communal majority and not a political majority. Claims of minority communities to services and posts were emphasised by him. The house accepted that the only minorities were the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. He said that in the constitution all sorts of weightages have been eliminated.

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[87] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 1496.
[88] Ibid., p. 1556.
[89] Ibid., p. 1497.
[90] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 691.

The scheduled castes were socially "untouchables", and it was this social stigma that worried Ambedkar more than anything else. His sense of selfrespect would not allow him to realise, or, though he had realised it, would not allow him to beg for economic salvation. He thought that once political and social equality was established and educationally the scheduled castes were advanced, every other difficulty would disappear. For him fundamental rights would mean establishment of equality only. "After all, what are we having this liberty for?", he asked and replied: "We are having this liberty in order to reform our social system, which is so full of inequalities, discriminations and other things which conflict with our fundamental rights."[91] For pulling their weight in the political field, he depended on adult franchise. Numerically, they were important and they knew that under adult franchise there was bound to be a "big change".[92] Being scattered, the scheduled castes had very little property to preserve, and no chance of ever getting a sufficient number of representatives in the legislature without reservation. Reservation of seats was to expire after ten years. He made it clear that any change must be made by the amendment to the constitution. Personally he was prepared to press for a larger time. Muslims and Christians got the reservations long before; but the scheduled castes got this only in the Constitution of 1935. They were commenced in 1937 and were in force only for about ten years. The 1935 Act was suspended and the scheduled castes were not in a position to enjoy the benefits of the privileges of the act. He said that it would have been quite proper to have given scheduled castes a longer term to these reservations.

The sixteen articles of the constitution, from 36 to 51, dealt with the directive principles. These covered a wide range of state activity embracing economic, social, legal, educational and international problems. They contained the positive obligations of the state towards its citizens. The Directive Principles of State Policy constituted a novel and hence a controversial aspect of the Indian Constitution. It was novel because before its incorporation into the Constitution of India only Ireland had such principles enunciated in its constitution. Its distinction from the fundamental rights had been a bone of contention; it was the very soul of the constitution. Pandit Nehru described these directives as representing a dynamic move towards a creative objective.

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[91] Ibid., p. 781.

[92] Ibid., Vol. V, p. 226.

The directives meant to ensure social and economic democracy in addition to political democracy which was secured by the provision of fundamental rights in a written constitution. Ambedkar said that the word "directive" should be retained in the heading, because the intention was that the Constituent Assembly should give certain directions to the future legislature and the future executive as to the manner in which they should exercise their legislative and executive powers. He observed that the proposed constitution was not a mechanism for capturing power. The proposed constitution sought to establish political democracy and to lay down an ideal before those who would be forming the government. That ideal was economic democracy. He pointed out that in the Directive Principles of State Policy there were certain implied powers, in the exercise of which the state could enact laws for the general welfare of the community which may even contravene fundamental rights.

According to Ambedkar, the directive principles were nothing but obligations imposed by the constitution upon the various governments in this country, that they should do certain things, although it said that if they failed to do them, no one would have the right to call for specific performance. But the fact that they were obligations of the government stood unimpeached. If the word "directive" were omitted, the intention of the Constituent Assembly in enacting that part would have failed in its purpose. He said that it was the intention of the Constituent Assembly that in future both the legislature and the executive should not merely pay lip-service "to those principles enacted in this part", but that they should be made the basis of all executive and legislative action that might be taken subsequently in the matter of the governance of the country. He remarked that the directive principles have no legal force behind them; but he was not prepared to admit that they had no sort of binding force at all. He was not prepared to concede that they were useless because they had no binding force in law. He said: "What are called directive principles is merely another name for Instruments of Instructions. The only difference is that they are instructions to the legislature and the executive... as to how they should exercise their power."[93]

Ambedkar remarked that prohibition was only a directive and it was not binding on the state to introduce it. It was left to the discretion of the state to introduce prohibition or not. He added that even if it was decided to introduce prohibition the time of its introduction was left to the individual states and to public opinion. He said that there was no compulsion on the state to act on the principle contained in respect of prohibition.

The attitude of the Drafting Committee and especially of Ambedkar as regards village panchayats was that they could not be the basis of new democracy. The Draft Constitution had discarded the village and adopted the individual as its unit. This was criticised by many members. They said that the Constitution should have been built upon village panchayats and district panchayats. Some wanted India to contain so many village governments.

Ambedkar replied these criticis in a clear-cut way. In this connection, he quoted Metcalfe:

> "Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down. Revolution succeeds revolution. Hindu, Pathan, Moghul, Mahratha, Sikh, English are all masters in turn but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. A hostile army passes through the country. The village communities collect their little cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked."

Ambedkar remarked further:

> "Knowing this what pride can one feel in them?... mere survival has no value. The question is on what plane they have survived? Surely on a low, on a selfish level. *I hold that the village republics have been the ruination of India.* I am therefore surprised that those who condemn provincialism and communalism should come forward as cham-

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93. Ibid., VII, pp. 41-42.

> pions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?"

K. T. Shah, A. K. Ayyangar and Shibbanlal Saksena criticised Ambedkar. Maulana Hasrat Mohani urged to make "a village soviet" as the unit of our constitution.

K. Santhanam in introducing Article 31A said, "The state shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of government."

Ambedkar accepted the amendment.

H. V. Kamath welcomed Ambedkar's attitude. He said: "Though Dr Ambedkar at first stigmatised the village as dens of superstition and ignorance or something like that, it is good that we embodied in the directive principles the salutory provision for village panchayats."[94]

Our constitution as a piece of mechanism laid down what was called parliamentary democracy. By it Ambedkar meant: one man one vote. He remarked that in this constitution a political democracy was established, because "to instal a perpetual dictatorship of a particular body of people" was not envisaged. He emphasised that it was the desire of the people to establish economic democracy also.

The framers had deliberately introduced in the directive principles a language which would not make it either fixed or rigid, so that enough room was left for people of different ways of thinking, with regard to the reaching of the ideal of economic democracy. Ambedkar pointed out that much of the misunderstanding under which most members were labouring would disappear if they would bear in mind that the object in framing this constitution was really twofold: to lay down the form of political democracy, and to lay down that India's ideal was economic democracy. He remarked:

> "In our judgment, the directive principles have a great value for they lay down that our aim is economic democracy. Because we did not want merely a parliamentary form of gov-

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[94] Ibid., pp. 494-95.

> ernment to be instituted through various mechanisms provided in the constitution, without any direction as to our economic ideal, as to what our social order ought to be, we deliberately included the directive principles in our constitution."[95]

Ambedkar suggested appointing a separate committee on economic planning and to include in its terms of reference the consideration of his proposals as well as of others relating to the planning of economic life of the community which was so essential for the maintenance of the liberty of the individual in modern conditions. He said: "It is a matter in which the labouring classes in general and the scheduled castes in particular are vitally concerned, and I, as a representative of the latter, regard it my duty to pursue the matter so that the proposals will be considered on its merits."[96] He suggested that there were various ways by which economic democracy could be brought about. There were those who believed in individualism, or in having a socialistic state or in the communistic idea as the most perfect form of economic democracy.[97]

As regards the charge that the directive principles were pious declarations, Ambedkar said that the intention of this Assembly was not to pay lip-service to these principles but that they were to be made the basis of all legislative and executive action, that they might be taking hereafter in the matter of the governance of the country.[98] He vehemently objected to making the constitution any other than a mere political contrivance. He cited the directive principles as giving us the substance of a socialistic state. He said: "If these directive principles are not socialistic in their direction, and in their content, I fail to understand what more socialism can be."[99]

Ambedkar admitted that according to Article 37, these directive principles were not justiciable, and that no one would be entitled to file a suit against the government. He remarked that the directive principles should not be disposed of in this way. These principles were bound to affect the decisions of the courts on constitutional questions, just as the provisions of Magna Carta had affected the decisions of English judges, and Preamble to the Declaration of Independence had affected the decisions of American judges.[100] The attitude of the judiciary towards the directives was that the directives should not only be subordinated to fundamental rights but could not be given effect to if they came in conflict with the operation of any other provision of the constitution for the mere reason that the directives were not "enforceable in a court of law".

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[95] Ibid.

[96] President Rajendra Prasad's Collections, File No. 25/48, item 28, Steering Committee.

[97] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 494.

[98] Ibid., p. 41.

[99] Ibid., pp. 494-95.

Ambedkar pointed out that as the directive principles were nothing else than a series of provisions containing implicitly in them the doctrine of implied powers, the courts should invoke them and support legislation undertaken by Parliament or state legislatures which tended to give effect to the directive principles embodied in the constitution. While intervening during the discussion on the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on 18 May 1951, he observed that they were nothing but obligations imposed by the constitution upon the state governments. The utility of the directives to the judiciary in spite of the "nonenforcement" clause in Article 37 is evident from the observations of M. C. Setalvad, Attorney General of India. He remarked: "These principles have helped the courts to exercise their power of judicial review. The directive principles are but an amplification of the Preamble to the Indian Constitution."[101]

In his opinion the directive principles were like the Instruments of Instructions issued to the Governor-General and to the governors under the Government of India Act, 1935 (Sections 13-53). They were really instructions to the executive and the legislatures as to how they should exercise powers. According to Prof K. C. Wheare, these declarations of liberal principles helped the Indian Constitution on its way and assisted its people in working their government; they were more than justified. It would, therefore, be "superficial to discuss these precepts as good resolutions fit only for paving stones on the broad and primrose-strewn way".[102] He said that even those who would capture power would have to respect those directive principles. They might not have to answer for this breach in a court of law. But they would certainly have to answer for the breach before the electorate at the election time. "What great value these directive principles possess", he added, "will be realised better when the forces of right contrive to capture power."[103]

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[100] Ghosh, *The Constitution of India*, p. 237.

[101] Quoted by V. D. Mahajan, *The Constitution of India*, pp. 148-49.

Ambedkar stressed that the directive principles were more important and the fundamental rights were subservient to the directive principles. Speaking on the 4th Amendment of the Constitution, he remarked: "There is an inherent contradiction in the constitution between the fundamental rights and the Directive Principles of the State Policy... It is up to this Parliament to remove the contradiction and make the fundamental rights subserve the Directive Principles of the State Policy."[104]

There is placed at the head of the Indian union a functionary who is called the President of the Indian union. Ambedkar compared him with the British king and the President of the USA. According to him, under the presidential system of America, the president is the chief head of the executive. Under the Draft Constitution the president occupied the same position as the king under the English Constitution. He was the head of the state, but not of the executive. He represented the nation, but did not rule the nation. He was the symbol of the nation. The President of the Indian union would be generally bound by the advice of his ministers. The presidential system of America is based on the separation of the executive and the legislature so that the president and the secretaries could not be members of the Congress. The Draft Constitution did not recognise this doctrine.

Both parliamentary and presidential systems are, of course, democratic. Ambedkar tested the democratic government on two things: stability and responsibility. He remarked, "The American and the Swiss systems give more stability and less responsibility.

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[102] Quoted from Gledhill, Alan, *The Republic of India*, p. 161.
[103] Constituent Assembly Debates, 4 November 1948, p. 41.
[104] Lok Sabha Debates, Part II, 14 March 1955.

The British system on the other hand gives you more responsibility, but less stability... The Draft Constitution in recommending the parliamentary system of executive has preferred more responsibility to more stability."[105]

As regards the election of the President, K. T. Shah suggested in an amendment that the President should be elected by the adult citizens of India. He said that election of the President by an electoral college was not sufficiently representative of the people's will. In reply, Ambedkar said that large size of the electorate, inadequacy of government machinery to manage the elections and the position of the President as only a figurehead in the constitution had been taken into consideration.[106] He stressed the fact that the President was not in the same position as the President of the USA, but the Prime Minister was elected on the adult suffrage.

D. D. Basu remarked in his *Commentary on the Indian Constitution*: "If any bill is brought in the legislature which is in direct contravention of any of these directives, the President or the governor may refuse his assent to such a bill on that ground, though the courts may not declare the act void if it is passed." Ambedkar in his foreword to the same edition disagreed with the above view. He said: "Our constitution does not warrant it, because ours is a parliamentary system of government wherein the President functions only with the aid and advice of the council of ministers and not vice versa."[107] He explained the reasons why the cabinet system of government, as prevailing in England, was preferable in India to the presidential system of government as existed in the United States of America.

The whole cabinet system is based on collective responsibility. It can be achieved only through the instrumentality of Prime Minister. Therefore he is really the keystone of the arch of the cabinet. There can be no collective responsibility unless and until he has statutory authority to nominate and dismiss the ministers. Ambedkar said that our constitution contained the principle of collective responsibility.

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105. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, pp. 32-33.
106. Ibid., p. 99.
107. Basu, D. D., *Commentary on the Indian Constitution*, First Edition, p. 196.

K. T. Shah in moving an amendment expressed the view that the Prime Minister should not be by statute. He thought that he had no objection if by convention a prime minister was retained as a part of the executive. Ambedkar said that Shah's proposition was fatal to the principles of collective responsibility. He said, "There are two principles by which it is forced: no person shall be nominated to the cabinet except on the advice of the Prime Minister, and no person shall be retained as a member of the cabinet if the Prime Minister says he shall be dismissed."[108]

Ambedkar clarified his position giving three reasons why proportional representation could not be accepted. "Proportional representation", he argued,

> "presupposes literacy on a large scale. Having regard to the extent of literacy in this country such a proposition was extravagant... In the house, where there is parliamentary system of government, you must necessarily have a party which is in majority and which is prepared to support the government. One of the disadvantages of proportional representation of the legislature is its division into a number of small groups."[109]

He further said that the Royal Commission appointed by the British Parliament in 1910 opposed proportional representation as it would not permit a stable government to remain in office. He urged the establishment of a stable government and maintenance of law and order. He said further,

> "There have been majorities and minorities in our country. There was an agreement between the two before the meeting of Constituent Assembly. Separate electorates were given up and joint electorates with reservation of seats were prescribed, definite quota of representatives to minorities were given. Proportional representation is really taking away by the backdoor what has already been granted to the minorities by this agreement; because it will not give to the minorities what they wanted, namely, a definite quota."[110]

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108. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 1159.
109. Ibid., p. 1262.
110. Ibid., pp. 1261-63.

The Supreme Court under a federal constitution is an arbiter between the disputes of the centre and the states, and is therefore an essential part of a federal system. It is at once the highest interpreter of the constitution and a tribunal for the final determination of the disputes between the union and its constituent parts. The Supreme Court stood at the apex of India's judicial hierarchy with effective power to supervise and control the working of the entire system. Explaining the nature of this system Ambedkar said: "The Indian federation, though a dual polity, has no dual judiciary at all. The high courts and the Supreme Court form one single integrated judiciary having jurisdiction and providing remedies in all classes under the constitutional law, the civil law, or the criminal law."[111] In India and the USA there is judicial review.

Ambedkar has grouped the arguments as regards the Supreme Court judges in 3 proposals: (1) judges of the Supreme Court should be appointed with the concurrence of the Chief Justice; (2) the appointments made by the President should be subject to the confirmation of two-thirds vote by Parliament; and (3) judges should be appointed in consultation with the Council of States. He further said that the appointments made by the executive subject to the concurrence of the legislature were not a very suitable proposition, because the appointments might be influenced by political pressure and political considerations.

The judiciary is engaged in deciding the issue between citizens and very rarely between citizens and the government. Consequently, the chances of influencing the conduct of a member of a judiciary by the government are remote, and therefore the provisions which are applied to the Federal Public Service Commission have no place so far as the judiciary is concerned. Ambedkar remarked: "The provision has been made that no member of the Public Service Commission shall be entitled to hold an office under the crown for a certain period after he has retired from the Public Service Commission."[112] He pointed out that the work of the Public Service Commission was one which was intimately connected with that of the executive. He further said that he was personally against a sitting judge of the

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[111] Ibid., p. 36.

[112] Ibid., Vol. VIII, pp. 259-60.

Supreme Court being assigned to any nonjudicial work, e.g., a diplomatic assignment and then his returning to the judiciary.

Certain writs in the constitution have been in existence in Great Britain for a number of years. The necessity was felt for enumerating certain writs in the constitution. Ambedkar characterised these writs as prerogative, and they could be sought for by an aggrieved party without bringing any proceedings or suit. The object of the writ was really to grant what he called interim relief.[113]

The matter of due process raised the question of the relationship between the legislature and the judiciary. Ambedkar said:

> "The due process clause, in my judgment, would give the judiciary the power to question the law made by the legislature. There are two views: the first is that the legislature may be trusted not to make any law which would abrogate the fundamental rights of man; and the second is that it is not possible to trust the legislature. There are dangers on both sides."[114]

The governor has the pivotal position in the states. He is the agent of the centre and influences the ministry-making. He is the constitutional head of the state. In other words, it means that although he is the "chief executive" in the exercise of his functions, the real power is in the hands of the council of ministers.

According to Ambedkar, the selection of the governor would be on the basis of personality. He thought it unnecessary to have such a functionary elected at so much cost and so much trouble, because the governor was purely ornamental. He remarked that the real issue was not election or nomination. The main and the crucial question was, should the governor have discretionary powers? It has been said in the course of the debate that the retention of the discretionary powers in the governor was contrary to the responsible government in the provinces. He remarked that retention in or vesting the governor with certain discretionary powers was in no sense contrary to or negation of responsible government.

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113. Ibid., Vol. VII, pp. 951-52.
114. Ibid., p. 122.

The provincial governments are required to work in subordination to the central government, and therefore, in order to see that they do act in subordination to the central government, the governor would reserve certain things in order to enable the President to see that the rules under which the provincial governments are supposed to act according to the constitution or in subordination to the central government are observed.[115] The moment the ministry has lost the confidence of the majority, it is presumed that the President would exercise his "pleasure" in dismissing the ministry.

The governor under the constitution has no functions which he can discharge by himself. Though he has no functions, he has certain duties to perform. The governor is bound to accept the advice of the ministry. He is the representative not of a party; he is the representative of the people as a whole of the state. It is in the name of people that he carries on the administration. Ambedkar concluded the debate by saying that governor's powers are nominal. It was a waste to spend public resources on a popular election for governorship.[116]

The Constituent Assembly as a whole did not want to take a decision on the question of establishing legislative councils in the states. The matter was left to be decided by the members of the legislative from each state. Several members in the Constituent Assembly were opposed to the idea of constituting the upper house for the states. They thought that an additional house for the Legislative Assembly in the states was superfluous. In this connection Ambedkar said: "Ever since the French Constituent Assembly met, there has been consistently a view which is opposed to second chambers. Now speaking for myself, I cannot say that I am very strongly prepossessed in favour of second chambers",[117] and remarked that second chambers have not been made a permanent part of the constitution.

Nagappa, a member of the Constituent Assembly, suggested that a provision should be made for the representation of agricultural labour. Ambedkar remarked that such provision was not necessary for the representation of agricultural labour in the upper chamber, because "the lower chamber will be, in my judgment, having a very large representation of agricultural labour in view of the fact that the suffrage on which the lower chamber would be elected would be adult suffrage".[118]

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[115] Ibid., pp. 500-02.

[116] Ibid., p. 520.

[117] Ibid., p. 269.

Muniswami Pillay stated that there should be special representation for the scheduled castes in the upper chambers. Ambedkar replied that the representation to be guaranteed to the scheduled castes should be guaranteed only in the lower house of the central and provincial legislatures.[119]

The separation of the executive and judiciary was embodied in the directive principles. While explaining the separation of judiciary and executive, Ambedkar remarked that the magistracy was intimately connected with the general system of administration. "Magistracy will not be under the control of the high court."[120] He clarified further: "Under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, the appointment, posting and promotion of the district judge was entirely in the hands of the governor. Now the provision is that the high courts shall be consulted."[121]

It has been the desire of this country since the time the Congress was founded that there should be separation of the judiciary from the executive. Ambedkar said: "We deliberately did not make it a matter of fundamental principle because if we had made it a matter of fundamental importance, it would have become absolutely obligatory instantaneously on the passing of the constitution to bring about the separation of the judiciary and the executive."[122] He said further: "The state shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the state", and continued that the directive principles ought to enunciate principles and ought not to go into details of the working out of the principles.[123]

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118. Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 1490.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid., p. 1571.
121. Ibid., p. 1579.
122. Ibid., pp. 582-83.
123. Ibid., p. 585.

Pandit H. N. Kunzru said that this proposition should have been included in the chapter relating to the directive principles. Pandit Nehru replied:

> "Pandit Kunzru seems to me to have gone off the track completely and to suspect a sinister motive on the part of the government about this business. So far as the government is concerned, it is entirely in favour of the separation of judicial and executive functions. I think, therefore, that Ambedkar's amendment far from lessening the significance of the importance of this high desirable change that we wish to bring about places it on a high level before the country."[124]

The provisions dealing with the all-India services were a special feature of the constitution. Under a federal system, there were separate services for the union and the states. Without an efficient civil service, it would be impossible for the government to carry and keep continuity of the policy. Ambedkar accepted the fundamental limitation upon the authority to dismiss such servants. He also defended the right to appeal to the Public Service Commission. He said that every state should have its own public service commission, and there must be a provision for a regional commission of two or more states. Many critics asked: "Why is distinction made between services to be employed under the Public Service Commission and the services to be employed under the high court, Supreme Court and the auditor-general?" Ambedkar clarified:

> "Those who are occupying the highest places in judicial department and the high court staff are required to exercise a certain amount of judicial discretion. Consequently, we felt that not only their salaries and pensions should be determined by the chief justice, with the approval of the President but the conditions of their service also should be left to be determined by the chief justice. In the case of the Public Service Commission much of the staff—in fact the whole of the staff—will be merely concerned with what we call 'ministerial duties' where there is no authority and no discretion.

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124. Ibid., pp. 588-89.

> is left. This is the reason why we have made this distinction."[125]

As regards the appointment of members of the Public Service Commission, some members urged to appoint scheduled caste men on the commission, Ambedkar remarked:

> "I do not think that any purpose will be served by making a provision whereby it would be obligatory upon the President to appoint a member of what might be called either a scheduled caste, scheduled tribe or backward class. The function of a member of Public Service Commission is a general one. He cannot be there to protect the interests of any particular class."[126]

Privileges were guaranteed to every member, such as freedom of speech and immunity from proceedings in any court of law in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or in any of its committees. With regard to this Ambedkar said:

> "We would have to adopt 3 courses: (1) To adopt them in the constitution, namely to set out in detail the privileges and immunities of Parliament and its members. (2) Parliament may make provision with regard to a particular matter and, until Parliament makes that provision, the existing position would stand. The 1935 Act conferred no privileges and no immunities on Parliament and its members. All that it provided for was a single provision that there shall be freedom of speech and no member shall be prosecuted for anything said in the debate inside Parliament. (3) This course we have followed—that the privileges of Parliament shall be the privileges of the House of Commons."[127]

The constitution empowered the President on his own satisfaction, whenever he felt that urgency required but only when the Parliament was not in session, to promulgate ordinances which had all the force of law, though of a temporary duration. Pocker in his speech urged that such an ordinance should not deprive any citizen of his fundamental right of personal liberty except on conviction after trial by a competent court of law. Ambedkar, however, defended the provision on the ground that it was necessary for an emergency enactment when the house was not in session.

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[125] Ibid., p. 555.
[126] Ibid., p. 630.
[127] Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 583.

A constitution is a dynamic document. It should grow with the growing nation and should suit the changing needs and circumstances of a growing and changing people. So long as the government established under the constitution continued to be a responsible government, so long as there was parliamentary democracy, constitutional changes were nothing but a reflection of the needs of the nation that it served. Ambedkar urged the necessity of amendments. He remarked:

> "The Draft Constitution has eliminated the elaborate and difficult procedures such as a decision by a convention or a referendum. The powers of amendment are left with the legislatures, central and provincial. It is difficult to conceive a simpler method of amending the constitution. I feel that it is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace-time and in war-time."[128]

Ambedkar in his speech gave provisions in the constitutions of Canada, Irish Free State, Switzerland, Australia and the USA. He said that nowhere is amendment made by simple majority. He further said:

> "We divide the various articles in 3 categories. In the first category we have placed certain articles which would be open to amendment by Parliament by a simple majority. To say that the whole of the constitution should be left liable to be amended by Parliament by majority is, in my judgment, too extravagant and too tall an order to be accepted by people responsible for drafting the constitution. The second set of articles required two-thirds majority. In the third set, two-thirds majority plus ratification of states."[129]

He challenged any of the critics to prove that any constituent assembly anywhere in the world had in the circumstances in

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128. Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 43.
129. Ibid., Vol. IX, pp. 1660-61.

which this country found itself provided such a facile procedure for the amendment of the constitution.[130]

Tributes were paid to Ambedkar for his zealous and arduous task of piloting the constitution of free India in the Constituent Assembly. It was expressed by some that Ambedkar as a signatory of Poona Pact bacame happy by giving equal opportunities to all classes and sections of the people who inhabited India. A Harijan member from Madras felt proud that his capacity has now been recognised not only by the Harijans, but all communities. His contribution created confidence in Harijans. Praise was showered on him for the successful piloting of the constitution. His "learned speeches" were praised by many and "particularly words fail to convey the gratitude for the legal acumen, the untiring industry, the consummate skill and the firmness, tempered with moderation with which the chairman of the Drafting Committee has piloted this constitution".[131] It was expressed that he has secured for himself a high position in the hearts of all and requests were made by Thakurdas Bhargav that he should not consider himself the leader of the scheduled castes but join the Congress and thereby be able to enter the circle of Congress High Command—a position which was much more significant and important than the narrow one he was occupying today.[132] M. J. Khandekar, a Harijan member, became very glad to see that Ambedkar worked very hard and not only worked, but gave up the idea of separate electorates and voted for joint electorates in the meeting of the advisory subcommittee.

Ambedkar was described as the "Modern Manu" by many members. "He was unique in his clarity of expression and thought and his mastery over constitutional problems including those of finance has been marvellous, unique, singular and complete."[133] His contribution dispelled all doubts and fears and he was considered to be one of the best patriots of this country. S. Sahaya said, "The achievement of independence would go to the credit of Mahatmaji and its codification to one of Mahatmaji's worst critics, viz the great architect of our great constitu-

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130. Ibid., Vol. XI, p. 876.
131. Ibid., p. 680.
132. Ibid., p. 682.
133. Ibid., p. 742.

tion, Dr Ambedkar." He said further, "He deserves the gratitude not only of this Assembly, but of this nation. . .and his masterly way of piloting will ever be remembered not only by this generation, but by the posterity with gratitude."[134] Another member said further that he has made a name for himself; he is lucidity and clarity personified.[135] R. V. Dhulekar said:

> "I would not say that his task was Herculean, because that is a very small word. He has performed a task worthy of the great Pandav Bhim, he has justified his name Bhim Rao, and he has performed the task with clarity of vision, clarity of thought and clarity of language."[136]

Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, a member of the Drafting Committee, concluded his speech by saying, "I would be failing in my duty if I do not express my high appreciation of the skill and ability with which my friend, the Hon Dr Ambedkar has piloted this constitution and his untiring work as the chairman of the Drafting Committee."[137] Govind Ballabh Pant called him "Pandit" saying that "his scholarship is evinced in preparing the draft of the constitution and in making a logical exposition of its provisions in this House".[138] Dr Pattabhi Sitaramayya said: "I should have liked to tell Dr Ambedkar what a steam roller intellect he brought to bear upon this magnificent and tremendous task: irresistible, indomitable, unconquerable, levelling down tall palms and short poppies; whatever he felt to be right he stood by, regardless of consequences."[139]

Any man who reads the constitution and studies the background can appreciate the estimate of Ambedkar as a constitutionalist made by Dr Pylee:

> "Ambedkar brought to bear upon his task a vast array of qualities, erudition, scholarship, imagination, logic and eloquence and experience. Whenever he spoke in the house usually to reply to the criticisms advanced against provisions of the Draft Constitution, there emerged a clear and lucid

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134. Ibid., p. 788.
135. Ibid., pp. 803-4.
136. Ibid., p. 828.
137. Ibid., p. 840.
138. Ibid., p. 909.
139. Ibid., p. 946.

> exposition of the provisions of the constitution. As he sat down, the mist of doubts vanished, as also the clouds of confusion and vagueness. Indeed, he was a Modern Manu and deserves to be called the Father or the Chief Architect of the Constitution of India."[140]

By his contribution Ambedkar did not remain a depressed class leader, but became one of a nation's heroes. He gave up the idea of separate electorates, joined hands with the national leadership and brought out a constitution that would safeguard the interests of minorities, and clear the way to democracy, political as well as economic.

A more penetrating criticism of Ambedkar's role as a constitution-maker came from Dr K. V. Rao. He was of opinion that Ambedkar was not "father" but "mother" of the constitution. He remarked, "if 'father' means the author of future life, the germinator of ideas, his role requires a more careful analysis." Apart from that, he had no part in making decisions, and far from germinating ideas, he had to compromise his own, fail in his purpose and finally accept and advocate the ideas of others. He came to safeguard the interests of scheduled castes; and he miserably failed in it; he could not even get from Patel a little concession to make the provision of reservation of seats for his community last longer. Most of the provisions also were against his own personal convictions. For instance, in his own personal writings, he advocated a presidential executive as most suited to Indian conditions, but later on he had to oppose it in the Constituent Assembly. He criticised the Objective Resolution as not containing "in most explicit terms that in order that there may be social and economic justice in this country there should be nationalisation of industry and nationalisation of land", and again he said, "I do not understand how it could be possible for any future government which believes in doing justice socially, economically and politically unless it is a socialistic economy."[141] But at a later stage he himself opposed an amendment moved by K. T. Shah to call India a "socialist state" because he said, "no constitution should contain any such philosophy."[142] He did not like the various administrative details but he had to put them in, he told the Assembly, because others wanted them.[143] He personally favoured the retention of the "due process" clause as well as the incorporation of a provision for a prohibition against search of the person and his house, but he was outvoted.

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[140] Pylee, M. V., *Constitutional Government in India*, p. 138.
[141] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, p. 98.
[142] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 402.

> "My reading of the constitution makes me feel that it is inappropriate to call Dr Ambedkar the 'Father of the Constitution'. If any people are entitled to be called so, they are Nehru and Patel, but I would like to call them 'Presiding Deities', the sources of all the ideas of the constitution—the real makers of the constitution. I would like to attribute fatherhood to them as well as to the members of the Drafting Committee in common, but would not like to single out Dr Ambedkar for this honour. We may call him, more appropriately 'the mother' of the constitution—and I am not using it in any depreciating or jocular sense. Dr Ambedkar had to bear in fact others' ideas and nurture them and bring them out as his own and this he did remarkably well 'possessing legal acumen, untiring industry, consummate skill and firmness tempered with moderation'."[144]

Dr Rao's criticism undermined present calculations and evaluations. Ambedkar's position in the Constituent Assembly was secondary, and he was revolving round the Congress leadership as a planet revolves round the sun. He deliberately took this position as he had to safeguard the interests of depressed classes in the constitution of free India. Dr Rao's evaluation takes us near the truth and deserves to be studied in that light.

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143. Ibid., p. 38

144. Rao, K. V., *Parliamentary Democracy of India*, pp. 10 and 11.

Chapter Six

NATIONALISM, NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

SECTION 1—NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

It is universally admitted that nationalism is a force in the history of mankind. It is man-made, and therefore it is closely related with man's life, pride, activity and well-being. It is a vital force to be reckoned with. It has some disruptive tendencies no doubt; but whether one calls it an irrational instinct or positive hallucination, the fact remains that it is still a potent force which has a dynamic power to disrupt empires. Nationalism is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. Ambedkar remarked that it was a double-edged feeling. It was a feeling not to belong to any other group. This was the essence of what is called a nationality and national feeling.[1]

Many Indian leaders of the 19th century regarded the British rule in India as providential. They looked at it as the force which would help them to come out from the old traditions and notions. Ambedkar also once thought on the same lines. He expressed that apart from all other defects or disabilities, British rule had conferred two benefits on Indians, viz one common central government and a feeling among the people belonging to different religions that they were part of one government.[2] He expressed his gratitude to the British rule for these gifts.[3] He realised that hatred of British rule would invite double enmity on his people. So he thought it prudent to cooperate with

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[1] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 13.

[2] Keer, *Ambedkar, Life and Mission*, p. 322.

[3] Speech in Bombay Legislative Assembly, April 1938; Keer, op. cit., p. 306.

British rule so far as his cooperation would enable him to secure those rights.[4]

Ambedkar's nationalism started with a different cause which amounted to the welfare of the downtrodden and poor. He wanted equality and civic rights for those persons who were deprived of them for centuries past. He had full faith in the greatness of his country and the dignity of his countrymen. Nationalism in him began as a protest, both against external domination and internal oppression. He held the British rule responsible for the negligence of the welfare of the millions of the people. He held that the depressed classes in no sense formed an integral part of the community, and remarked that the status granted to these poor people was "midway between that of the serf and the slave". According to him, this enforced servility and bar to human intercourse were due to untouchability, which involved not merely the possibility of discrimination in public life, but actually worked out as a positive denial of all equality of opportunity and as a denial of the most elementary of civic rights on which all human existence depended. He said that the whole social and economic code of life would be amended by our own government. The British government would never be able to play such a role. "It is only a government which is of the people, for the people and by the people that will make this possible."[5] He clarified further that though he had quarrel with caste Hindus over some points, he was ready to lay down his life in defence of the motherland.[6] National urge came to him through his pride and dignity both for the country and its people.

It was universally regarded that the British were neutral in social and religious matters; but Ambedkar made it clear that the socalled British neutralism was a myth. He remarked, "The British government did not energetically and enthusiastically work for the restoration of the rights of the depressed classes and that it did not exercise its power to strike at the undemocratic denial of elementary human rights to the untouchables."[7] Unless the Indian people secured political power and unless that power was concentrated in the hands of the socially suppressed section of Indian society, it would not be possible to completely wipe out all social, legal and cultural disabilities under which that section suffered. He made a clear distinction between the freedom of the country and of the people of that country which the western writers on political science overlooked. His main stress was on the freedom of the people. Without freedom, nationalism became a means of internal slavery, forced labour and organised tyranny for the poor and servile classes.

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[4] Ibid., p. 58.

[5] *Thus Spoke Ambedkar*, compiled by Bhagwandas, pp. 8-9.

[6] Keer, op. cit., p. 339.

[7] Desai, A. R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 246.

Ambedkar had no faith in the wordy cry of the British for democracy and independence. He knew that he would have to fight both the caste Hindus and the British government for respect of political rights. He made clear that "it is entirely wrong to concentrate all our attention on the political independence of our country, and to forget the foremost serious problem of social and economic independence. It is suicidal to imagine that political independence necessarily means real all-sided freedom."[8] Unity of the country, not only political but also social, was his supreme concern. Unity appeared to him as something much nobler a task than mere conflict with the alien government.

Though Ambedkar belonged to non-Hindi speaking area, and his mother-tongue was Marathi, yet he was very confident of one language being accepted by all countrymen, which would smoothen the way to democracy and removal of racial and cultural tensions in our own land. Through one common language—Hindi—he wished to have two things: a sense of unity and oneness and a strong feeling of nationalism. He had deep faith in India's cultural unity. He remarked that this cultural unity defied political and racial divisions.[9]

According to Ambedkar, the essential feature of communalism was a sense of "groupism" based on narrow interests, habits and sheer slogans. It created antisocial activities. He laid stress on the need of fighting against provincialism, linguism, casteism and communalism. To him, casteism was against the spirit of nationalism. "Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. Virtue has become caste-ridden, and morality has become caste-bound."[10] This caste-feeling was the mother of communalism. To him, nationalism meant the negation of caste-spirit and caste-spirit was nothing but deep-rooted communalism. He regarded that communal feelings were a menace to national integration. He was convinced that nationalism was to receive its perfect harmony in the realisation of social brotherhood of men irrespective of caste, colour and creed.

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[8] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 21 March 1940.

[9] Ambedkar, op. cit., p. 344.

Ambedkar has expressed his feelings as regards nationalism, in terms of majority and minority. According to him, Indian nationalism has developed a new doctrine which he called the divine right of the majority to rule the minorities according to the wishes of the majority. He remarked, "Any claim for the sharing of power by the minority is called communalism, while monopolising the whole power by the majority is called nationalism."[11] He condemned all kinds of hyprocrisy and oppression in the name of religion and nationalism. His view of patriotism and nationalism implied economic, political, social and cultural equality and liberty and moral values. His view of nationalism demanded not only the liberation of every slave country but also the freedom for all subject and subjugated masses even in free countries.

Political-minded people resented the expression "the people of India" in the Constituent Assembly. They preferred the expression "the Indian nation". Ambedkar asked: "How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation?" He said further, "The sooner we realise that we are not as yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the word, the better for us."[12]

The Simon Commission had no representatives from Indians and as such the Indian National Congress asked all nationalists to boycott it and hold countrywide demonstrations against it. Such demonstrations were held in Bombay. At that time, Ambedkar was a professor in Government Law College, Bombay. He decided to cooperate with the commission and accordingly accepted a membership of a committee formed in Bombay. Yusuf Meherally and Alva were students of the Law College and participants in the youth movement. These young men with other students honestly held that Ambedkar had betrayed the nation by cooperating with the commission. They thought that he was a political mendicant. Ambedkar clarified his position. He said: "In that committee, I have always upheld the task of the people. But if the power in the hands of the people is being misused, then I will support the present government."[13]

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[10] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 37.

[11] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 52.

[12] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 980.

Ambedkar opposed the civil disobedience movement started by Gandhiji in 1930. He thought that it was extremely inopportune. He remarked that this movement was not a rebellion as it could not oust the British bureaucracy.[14] Similar reaction was expressed by him on the eve of the "Quit India" movement. He described Gandhiji's all-out open rebellion as both irresponsible and insane, a bankruptcy of statesmanship and a measure to retrieve the Congress prestige that had gone down since the war started. He said: "It would be a matter of madness to weaken law and order at a time when the barbarians were at the gates of India for the mastery of India. If democracy won, no one would stand in the way of India's independence."[15] He said that if drastic action had not been taken by the government in August 1942, India would have been overrun by the Japanese and the Germans.[16] Ambedkarites kept themselves aloof from the struggle and concentrated their efforts on militarisation.[17]

Though in general Ambedkar's attitude was hostile to the civil disobedience movement, still the increasing pressure of the nationalist forces had an influence on him. The salt satyagraha campaign (1930) spread over the nation. It reflected in many spheres. Satyagraha in forests throughout the country was started. In Chirner, in Kolaba district in Maharashtra, the satyagraha in forests was started on 25 September 1930. There was firing, mass arrests and many deaths. Ambedkar appeared in the court on behalf of four accused on 16 March 1931. He pleaded

[13] Ambedkar's interview to the magazine *Sudarshan*.

[14] Keer, op. cit., p. 219.

[15] Coupland, Vol. II, p. 294.

[16] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 326.

[17] Keer, op. cit., p. 372.

the case ably. People expressed a debt of gratitude to him for the patriotic service he had rendered to the country in the Chirner trial.

Though Ambedkar was not with the nationalist movement started in the country, still he was not always supporting the government. He was afraid that the British would choose to advertise our unfortunate conditions, not with the object of removing them, but only as an excuse for retarding the political progress of India. The British government was a foreign government and so there could not be much advancement in our conditions. He asked:

> "Has the British government done anything to remove your untouchability? Before the British you could not draw water from the village. Has the British government secured you the right to the well? Before the British you could not enter the temple. Can you enter now? Before the British you were denied entry into the police force. Does the British government admit you in the force? Before the British you were not allowed to serve in the military. Is that career open to you? Gentlemen, to none of these questions you can give an affirmative answer."

He stated that there was certainly no fundamental improvement in the position of the untouchables. He said further:

> "Nobody can remove your grievances as well as you can, and you cannot remove them unless you get political power in your own hands. No share of this political power can come to you so long as the British government remains as it is. It is only in a swaraj constitution that you stand any chance of getting the political power into your own hands without which you cannot bring salvation to your people."[18]

The interests of the depressed classes and their liberation were inevitably linked up by him with the common national movement of liberation. These thoughts were expressed by him when the anti-imperialist movements and feelings in the country were taking shape in the form of satyagraha and civil disobedience under the leadership of Gandhiji. But the anti-British feelings of a great community were not culminated in the common national struggle for emanciation. His aloofness from the current national trend was characterised as the expression of his anti-national and therefore pro-British feelings. This antimovement trend was current among the depressed classes.

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[18] Dutt, R. P., *India Today*, pp. 243-44.

To cooperate with the foreign government when necessary, but not to make frontal attack on the nationalist forces became the watchword of Ambedkar's policies. After the outbreak of the second world war, he gave unconditional support to the British government. He characterised the war as a war between dictatorship and democracy and that dictatorship, according to him, was based not on any moral order but on racial arrogance.[19] He said that labour must fight for victory over nazism, and if nazism would be successful liberty would be found to be suppressed and equality denied.[20] He visualised that after the war British domination would be weakened, and fruits of victory would be independence and a new social order. To abolish war, he said, it was necessary to win the war and establish a just peace.[21]

After the release of the Congress leaders in 1945, establishment of the interim government was on the agenda. The demand of the Muslim League and the adamant attitude of Jinnah were the hindrances. Some people tried to have rapprochement between the Congress and Ambedkar, but the anti-Congress feelings of Ambedkar still persisted. He remarked: "Only a man who has no selfrespect will cooperate with the Congress. I am a greater nationalist than any of the congressmen."[22] According to him, the problem of independence was linked with the solution of the communal problem by the British government. He stressed the necessity of the political freedom of India and remarked that to make the independence dependent upon the agreement of the different communities was to postpone its solution indefinitely.[23]

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19. Keer, op. cit., p. 349.
20. Ambedkar's Speech, All India Radio, 13 November 1942.
21. Keer, op. cit., p. 349.
22. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 239.
23. Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution*, p. 465.

The increasing consciousness of the fact that the British were going to withdraw their power from India urged Ambedkar to have some compromise with the Congress. The partition of the country made it clear that Congress was the only political organisation which would be able to command confidence and rule the country. He made clear that on the inauguration of the constitution, India has attained equality in politics but he warned that there was still inequality in social and economic life. He urged for the removal of this contradiction at the earliest moment, "or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up".[24] He emphasised that people should make the political democracy a social and economic democracy. The problem before the country was whether people would place the country above their creed or creed above country. "But if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy... and probably be lost forever." So people must determine "to defend the independence with the last drop of our blood". He warned that up to this time people were blaming the British, but now they had no such excuse of blaming the British for anything wrong.[25]

The slogan of Ambedkar was: "Be a ruling race." He tried to transform the depressed classes into a political army and pressed their political claims which were conceded in the Constitution of 1935 in the form of special representation of these classes. He considered that unless the Indian people secured political power and that power did not concentrate in the hands of the socially suppressed section of the Indian society, it was not possible to completely wipe out all social, legal and cultural disabilities from which that section suffered.

The problem of abolishing untouchability was bound up with that of a basic socio-economic reconstruction of the Indian society. The antiuntouchability movement which came into existence, and which subsequently gathered momentum, was the expression of the growth of larger national and human consciousness among the Indian people. It was an essential part of the national and democratic movement of the Indian people. The removal of untouchability as a programme in the Congress movement accelerated the pace of ameliorative movements in the country. The struggle for swaraj demanded the democratic alliance of all castes and communities in India. The untouchables were mostly landless labourers, semiserfs or engaged in worst occupations. They suffered from twofold evils: economic and social. Their social position accentuated their economic exploitation and their miserable economic conditions tended to stabilise their low status.

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[24] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. XI, p. 977.

[25] Ibid., pp. 987-90.

Increasing consciousness of their basic human rights was a part of the general national democratic awakening which had taken place among the Indian people during British rule. The humanitarian activity of the members of the upper classes, the economic forces, growing industrial civilisation and the impact of modern education—were the factors that helped to weaken the prejudice of untouchability. The formation of Congress ministries under the Government of India Act, 1935, and the role of a leader of an opposition party led Ambedkar to take definite positions upon certain matters. When the left parties protested against the antistrike bill sponsored by the Congress Party in Bombay in 1938, Ambedkar joined communists and other trade union leaders and brought about a successful strike of workers in Bombay. When Ambedkar was expressing the demands of the people, and was leading the masses, he, as a leader, went ahead of his followers. But when he was not backed by mass movements, he became isolated and progovernment tendencies became dominant.

Gandhiji was the symbol of the rising tide of India's anti-imperialist struggle. He started different campaigns to mobilise people for the national struggle. Satyagraha, civil disobedience, noncooperation, national education and such other weapons were skilfully used by him to organise the masses for the national liberation struggle. Gandhiji was the leader of the Congress; nay, the leader of leaders. His word was obeyed in Congress circles as religious mandates. Hundreds and thousands of people were inspired by him and their energies were chanelled through the Congress. Congress was the weapon of the anti-imperialist forces of Indian struggle.

On this background, Ambedkar's criticism of Congress and

Gandhiji, the vulgarisation he made of "the fight for freedom" naturally aroused the sentiments of the people and many leaders attacked him as antinational and therefore pro-British. All the nationalist leaders and the national organisations boycotted the Simon Commission but Ambedkar gave his evidence before the commission. His students in the Law College were against him and they regarded him at that time as antinational.

Gandhiji and Congress were trying to represent the nation and as such the representation they thought must be only through Congress, because that would only sharpen the Indian struggle and the united demand would be backed by sanctions and without any division in our ranks. That would also give a crushing blow to the imperialist policy of "divide and rule". At the Round Table Conference in 1931, Gandhiji insisted that he, as a leader of the Congress delegation, should be the only representative of the untouchables, but it hurt the pride of Ambedkar and he came out to oppose Congress and Gandhiji and organised Independent Labour Party and Scheduled Castes Federation.

The questions arose : Why such a big community was cut off from the nationalist movement? What led them to support the separatist tendencies? How they were evaluating the whole phenomenon?

The feeling of bitterness was the main cause of the unbridgeable gap that separated the depressed classes from the rest of the people of India during the years of struggle for independence. Ambedkar always maintained that mere political independence was not enough, social emancipation must also be won. After independence he changed his thoughts and advised his followers to cooperate freely with other sections of the society. This thought of cooperation with the other sections led him to enter the Constituent Assembly and later the Nehru cabinet.

SECTION 2 — NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Ambedkar was of the opinion that impersonal forces were determining factors in making history; but that "the effect of impersonal forces depended on man must also be admitted". He regarded that great men had a role in making the history. According to him the theory that man was a creature of time would be a wrong interpretation of history.[26]

To him sincerity is the first characteristic of a great man. He remarked, "Without the combination of sincerity and intellect, no man can be great."[27] A great man is something very different from an eminent individual. A great man finds a way to save society in its hour of crisis. He must be motivated by the dynamics of a social purpose and must act as the scourge and the scavenger of society.[28] He was no worshipper of idols. He believed in breaking them. He regarded that our country was greater than great men; and the worship of great men and our service to our country were two very different things and even contradictory of each other.[29]

According to Ambedkar, Justice M. G. Ranade was a man of sanguine temperament, of genial disposition and versatile in his capacity.

A petition was sent by the commissioned and noncommissioned officers of the Mahar community to the government of India against the orders issued in 1892 banning the recruitment of the Mahars in the army. On inquiry, it was found that this was a copy of a petition which was drafted by Ranade to help the aggrieved Mahars to obtain redress.

Ranade had the sincerity which was the sum total of all his qualities. Besides being a lawyer and judge of the high court, he was big in intellect. "He was a first class economist, a first class historian, a first class educationist and a first class divine."[30] Though not a politician he was a profound student of politics. "It would be difficult to find in the history of India any man who would come up to Ranade in the width of his learning, the breadth of his wisdom and the length of his vision. His reading was on the scale of the colossal, and every inch he was a scholar."[31] He was known more as a social reformer than as a historian, economist or educationist. "He was great not merely by the standards of his time, but he was great measured by any standard."[32]

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[26] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 5.
[27] Ibid., p. 13.
[28] Ibid., p. 14.
[29] Ibid., Preface.
[30] Ibid., p. 15.
[31] Ibid., p. 16.

Ranade realised that the downfall of our society was due to certain weaknesses in the Hindu social system. Social reform, therefore, became the one dominant purpose of his life. He founded the Social Conference, an all-India organisation which ran as an adjunct to the Indian National Congress. He attended the sessions as though it was a pilgrimage and fostered the cause of social reform. Ambedkar held him in high respect.

A social reformer required courage of conviction. He had to devote all his energies for the reform of his society. When the social reformer challenged society he should be prepared to be excommunicated at any time. He would not be regarded as a martyr. Ambedkar remarked, "Courting prison has become an act of martyrdom in India."[33] According to him, political prisoners could make no claim to greater courage than a social reformer.

Two schools of thought were prominent in Maharashtra in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. One school was orthodox in its beliefs but nonpolitical in its outlook; the other was modern in its beliefs but primarily political in its aims and objects. According to Ambedkar, the former school was led by V. K. Chiplunkar and the other was led by Lokamanya Tilak. Thus the intelligentsia was divided into these two schools, both of which combined against Ranade's school of thought.

The political form of democracy presupposes a democratic form of society. The formal framework of democracy was of no value and would indeed be a misfit if there was no social democracy. Assuming these things as basic, Ambedkar remarked that the "political" school never realised that democracy was not a form of government, it was essentially a form of society. Ranade's opponents never realised the fact that "Democracy is incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness, resulting in the distinction between the privileged and unprivileged."[34] Ranade argued that there were no rights in Hindu society. There were privileges. But these privileges were for a few and the disabilities were for a vast majority. He wanted to vitalise the conscience of Hindu society which had become moribund as well as morbid.[35] He aimed at creating a real social democracy, without which there could be no sure and stable politics. He warned his opponents against playing the part of political radicals and social tories. He said : "You cannot be liberal in politics and conservative in religion. The heart and head must go together."[36] But above all he held the view that moral stamina was more important than political freedom.

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 20.

[34] Ibid., p. 36.

According to Ambedkar, the cause of political deadlock was absence of the settlement of the communal question. He believed that our social system was "too undemocratic, too overweighed in favour of the classes, and against the masses, too class-conscious and too communally-minded".[37]

The aim of Ranade was to cleanse the old order of society if not to build a new one. He insisted on improving the moral tone of Hindu society. Ambedkar asserted : "If Ranade had been heard and followed, if it could not have avoided communal settlement, it would have made it easy."[38] If the social reform movement had been on a wider scale, then harmony between one community and another would have increased and the problem of communal settlement would not have arisen at all. He remarked that desertion of the Social Reform Conference meant the triumph of politicians over the social reformers. To him though Ranade was not on the winning side, still he was not on the wrong side. He said : "Ranade has had his revenge. Is not the grant of political safeguard a penalty for denying the necessity of social reform?"[39]

According to Ambedkar, the postulates of Ranade's political philosophy were : first, Ranade had never before him an imaginary ideal. According to him, the ideal must be a practical one. Second, in politics, sentiment and temperament of the people are more important than intellect and theory. Third, in politi-

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35. Ibid., p. 37.
36. Ibid., p. 38.
37. Ibid., p. 39.
38. Ibid., p. 40.
39. Ibid.

cal negotiations, the rule must be what is possible.

He commented: "Indeed it was this which divided the liberals from the Congress. I am not a liberal, but I am sure the view Ranade held was the right one."[40] He analysed the basic philosophy of Ranade and Tilak and came to the conclusion that "Tilak would have the possible, maximised by the application of sanctions; Ranade would look askance at sanctions. On the rest they were agreed. The absence of sanctions in Ranade's philosophy need not detract much from its worth." Modesty was the virtue that first attracted everyone towards Ranade. "His intellectual attainments could have justified any amount of pride, nay even insolence."[41] He had not a tinge of egotism in him. Serious youths were captivated by his learning and geniality. He had that "ennobling influence". "His greatness lies in the fact that he can be a guide, friend and philosopher to the present, nay even to future generations."[42] It is said of Ranade that he believed that the conquest of India by the British was providential. In short, Ranade was accused of being opposed to India's independence. This charge against Ranade was refuted by Ambedkar characterising it "false and without any foundation".

Among our national leaders Ambedkar was very close to Lala Lajpat Rai. Being exiled from India, Lalaji was in the United States of America from 1913 to 1916. He was a radical in political affairs as he was a confirmed social reformer. Ambedkar was confirmed about his integrity. Lalaji thought that the caste Hindus must try honestly to educate the untouchables and raise them to elevated positions in society, and for this Ambedkar revered him most.

Ambedkar was studying in Columbia University. He was very regular and used to sit in the library in a particular place. Lalaji used to go to that library. He saw that an Indian student was studying very regularly and seriously. Lalaji enquired about this youth. When he came to know that Ambedkar was an untouchable by birth, he tried to win over and persuade him to the political, if not the Ghadar, movement. Lalaji's efforts to win over Ambedkar failed. In September 1916, Lalaji called a conference of Indian students studying in America but Ambedkar did not attend.[43]

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[40] Ibid., p. 54.
[41] Ibid., p. 52.
[42] Ibid., p. 63.

Lalaji was caned by the police when he was leading the demonstration against the Simon Commission in Lahore on 30 October 1928, and he succumbed on 17 November 1928. When Ambedkar read this he burst into tears and in a public meeting condemned the police atrocities. He wrote an article in *Bahishkrit Bharat* in which he said, "Lalaji was honest, selfless, ready to sacrifice for what he undertook. He did not separate politics and social reform."[44] He praised all his precious qualities as a national leader, a social reformer, an educationist and a journalist (editor of the *People*). Though Lalaji's sympathetic attitude towards the upliftment of the untouchables was regarded as honest, still he regarded it as insufficient for the uplift of untouchables.

SECTION 3 — STRUGGLE WITH GANDHIJI

No other leader of India had been so bitterly criticised as Mahatma Gandhi by Ambedkar.

Gandhiji was the leader of the Indian National Congress, and the Congress being a premier organisation wedded to the struggle for India's liberation, he became the symbol of fighting Indian nationalism. Hundreds and thousands of his followers were ready to sacrifice for him and for the country. Because of Gandhiji removal of untouchability was one of the political programmes of the Congress. Gandhiji said that "without the removal of this curse, swaraj is a meaningless term". But Ambedkar thought that Gandhiji liked to create illusions in order to use them as arguments to support his cherished proposition.[45]

The first meeting of Ambedkar with Gandhiji took place in Bombay on 14 August 1931. In the course of their conversation, Gandhiji explained to him how in spite of opposition from his colleagues he introduced the removal of untouchability as one of the main programmes of the Congress; but Ambedkar replied : "Congress did nothing beyond giving formal recognition to this problem."[46] He continued : "Had it been sincere, it would have surely made the removal of untouchability a condition, like the wearing of khaddar for becoming a member of the Congress."[47] He complained that Hindus were not showing signs of change of heart in regard to the problem of untouchables. "We are not prepared to have faith in great leaders and mahatmas. Let me be brutally frank about it. History tells that mahatmas like fleeting phantoms raise dust, but no level." With this criticism he asked, "Why should the congressmen oppose our movement and dub me a traitor?" He explained that the untouchables could not love this land, could not call this their own land, because of the injustice inflicted on the untouchables, and said : "If at all I have rendered any national service... it is due to my unsullied conscience and not due to any patriotic feelings in me."

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[43] Khairmoday, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 72.

[44] Ibid., p. 192.

[45] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 38.

Gandhiji put forth his claim for the representation of all sections and all communities including the untouchables. Ambedkar asked his men to denounce the attitude of Gandhiji. Gandhiji strongly resisted special representation. Ambedkar said that Gandhiji valued more his reputation as the saviour of the untouchables than his reputation as the champion of swaraj or as the protagonist of ahimsa.[48] According to him, "As a unifying force, Gandhiji was a failure."[49]

Gandhiji attacked everybody who had taken part in producing the Minorities Pact at the Round Table Conference. He was particularly furious at the recognition given to the untouchables as a separate political entity. "I can understand the claims advanced by other communities; but the claim advanced on behalf of the untouchables that is the 'unkindest cut of all'. It means the perpetual bar sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India."[50] Then Gandhiji remarked that if there was a referendum, he would top at the poll; and warned that sepa-

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46. Keer, op. cit., p. 165.
47. Ibid., p. 167.
48. Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 56.
49. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
50. Ibid., p. 68.

rate electorates and the separate reservation were not the ways to remove that bar sinister. He regarded untouchability as no part of Hinduism. He said, "I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived."[51] Gandhiji remarked that "the bitter experiences that he (Ambedkar) had undergone has for the moment warped his judgment". According to Gandhiji, the claim that Ambedkar represented the whole of the untouchables of India was not tenable. He thought that the attitude of Ambedkar would create a division of Hinduism. Therefore Gandhiji declared : "I would not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world... I do not mind untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity."[52] Gandhiji did not want division among the ranks of the untouchables, and he declared to resist such an eventuality with his life even !

The Muslims and Sikhs were well organised, but the untouchables were not organised. According to Gandhiji, if separate electorates were given then there would be a division among villagers, the lives of untouchables as villagers would be miserable since villages were the strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy.[53] He thought that the proposal for a special representation of Muslims or Sikhs could be tolerated, but only "as a necessary evil"; but separate electorates for the untouchables were a "positive danger" to the untouchables. This attitude of Gandhiji enraged Ambedkar and his followers. According to Gandhiji, the only way was to put them on the voters' list and give them fundamental rights in the constitution. To Gandhiji untouchability was a stigma on Hindu religion. In the near future it would vanish. But separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. He remarked, "Separate electorates to the untouchables will ensure them bondage in perpetuity."[54] Gandhiji thought that if untouchability were to vanish then there would be no untouchables, and if separate electorates were not conceded to the untouchables, adult franchise would give them complete security.[55] The Poona Pact increased the fixed quota of seats but it also took away the right to the double vote. Ambedkar thought that the second vote given by the Communal Award was a priceless privilege. Its value as a political weapon was beyond reckoning. Disliked by the Hindus and disfavoured by the untouchables the Pact was given recognition by both parties and was embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935.

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[51] Ibid., p. 69.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., p. 70.
[54] Ibid., p. 71.

Temple entry movement was a corollary to the movement for the removal of untouchability and the Poona Pact. According to Ambedkar, Gandhiji's aim in joining the temple entry movement was to destroy the basis of the claim of the untouchables for political rights by destroying the barrier between them and the Hindus which made them separate from the Hindus. He characterised Gandhiji's temple entry movement as a strange game of political acrobatics. He remarked, "When the Hindus threaten to defeat the Congress in the election, Gandhi in order to preserve political power in the hands of the Congress gives up temple entry."[56] He was convinced that if the untouchables made progress in the economic, educational and political fields, temple entry would follow automatically.[57]

After Gandhiji took charge of the Congress, the Congress forged sanctions. Ambedkar gave Gandhiji the credit for the creation of a party machine.[58] The sanctions in the armoury of the Congress, i.e. Gandhiji, were : noncooperation, boycott, civil disobedience and fast. Civil disobedience was a deliberate breach of law with a view to courting imprisonment, filling jails and thereby discrediting the government. It was practised on a mass scale or individually. Fasting was reserved for Gandhiji only. According to Ambedkar, demonstrations between 1920-42 for sanctions have come to be described as "fight for freedom", but "the reckless use of sanctions has made the partition of India starker, surer and nearer".[59] He opposed Gandhian satyagraha because he thought that Gandhiji had never used the weapon of satyagraha against the Hindus to get them to throw

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55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., p. 116.
57. Keer, op. cit., p. 220.
58. Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 162.
59. Ibid., p. 167.

open wells and temples to the untouchables. He said that there was not a single fast undertaken by Gandhiji for the removal of untouchability.[60]

Ambedkar met Gandhiji but they could not agree on the solution of the problem of conversion.

Walchand Hirachand and Jamanlal Bajaj asked Ambedkar why he did not join Gandhiji's camp, so that he might have boundless resources at his disposal for the uplift of the depressed classes. Ambedkar told them frankly that he vitally differed from Gandhiji on many points and said that "he would not sacrifice his conscience for his success".[61] He remarked that Gandhiji had always discriminated between the constitutional safeguards of untouchables and other communities; but he had never explained his reasons. He remarked that Muslims and Sikhs were fragments of old ruling communities, therefore Gandhi favoured them. So the untouchables could not regard such a man as "sincere" and "honest".[62] According to him, Gandhiji wished to retain caste and abolish untouchability. He said, "such a man cannot be a friend of untouchables".[63]

Ambedkar thought that Gandhiji did not wish to antagonise the caste Hindus. When the untouchables were launching satyagraha campaigns, Gandhiji surprised the untouchables by issuing a statement condemning their campaign of satyagraha against the Hindus. He stated that "Satyagraha was to be used only against the foreigners."[64] Ambedkar believed that Gandhiji did not want the untouchables to organise and be strong. To him, "the Harijan Sevak Sangh under the pretence of service was out to kill the spirit of independence from among the untouchables".[65]

Gandhiji had categorically stated that removal of untouchability did not mean interdining or intermarriage between the caste Hindus and the untouchables. His antiuntouchability, according to Ambedkar, was that the untouchables would be classed as Shudras instead of ati-Shudras. They are to follow their hereditary professions. Hinduism believed in caste, cow-worship, upheld the law of karma, predestination of man's condition in this world, accepted the authority of the Shastras, believed in avatars or incarnations of god and idols—all this is accepted by Gandhism. Ambedkar remarked : "All that the Gandhism has done is to find a philosophic justification for Hinduism and its dogmas."[66]

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[60] Ibid., p. 248.

[61] Keer, op. cit., p. 259.

[62] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 258.

[63] Ibid., p. 261.

[64] Ibid., p. 263.

[65] Ibid., pp. 267-69.

According to Ambedkar the noncooperation movement had its origin in the Khilafat agitation and not in the Congress movement for swaraj;[67] that it was started by the Khilafatists to help Turkey and adopted by the Congress only to help the Khilafatists; that swaraj was not its primary object, but its primary object was Khilafat and that swaraj was added as a secondary object to induce the Hindus to join it. It was started to make a common front against the British. According to Ambedkar, Gandhiji achieved double purpose by this : firstly he carried the Congress plan of winning over the Muslims to its culmination and secondly he made the Congress a power in the country which it would not have been, if the Muslims had not joined it.[68]

Gandhiji started by protesting that the Muslim League did not represent the Muslims and that Pakistan was a fancy of Jinnah. To Ambedkar "The only basis of Gandhi's extraordinary view is the existence of what are called Nationalist Muslims."[69] He showed that Ansari refused to oppose the Communal Award though Congress and Nationalist Muslims opposed it. According to him, the premises of Gandhiji's reasoning were uprooted and his baseless arguments were insufficient to solve the communal problem, though he favoured Muslims.

According to Ambedkar, under the leadership of Gandhiji, Hindu society, if it did not become a political madhouse, certainly became mad after politics. Noncooperation, civil disobedience, and "the cry for swaraj" took the place which social reform once had in the minds of Hindus.[70] He honoured Gandhiji as a devotee practising celibacy, but he always used to say that he was not a rationalist. He held a good opinion of Gandhiji's fast, and regarded highly Gandhiji's capacity and tenacity to continue fast.[71] He remarked that Gandhiji's so-called mesmerism could not capture him. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose yielded to Gandhi; but he could never do so, and if he ever entered the Congress, he thought he would shine out there by dint of his merits.[72] He loved the principle of absolute nonviolence as an end and believed in relative violence as a means. He was of the opinion that Gandhiji's nonviolence was derived from Jainism and not from the Buddha, who never stretched it to the extreme view of Jainism.[73]

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[66] Ibid., pp. 295-96.
[67] Ibid., p. 137.
[68] Ibid., p. 142.
[69] Ibid., p. 404.

Ambedkar referred to the age of Ranade as the age of renaissance. In that age the leaders struggled to modernise India. In the age of Ranade leaders depended upon experience, the leaders of the Gandhian age depended upon their "inner voice" as their guide. The leaders claimed that the India of Gandhiji was superior to the India of Ranade. They said that the age of Gandhiji was an agitated and an expectant age, which the age of Ranade was not. "If the India of Ranade was less agitated, it was more honest and that if it was less expectant, it was more enlightened."[74] In his opinion, in the age of Ranade, men and women did engage themselves seriously in studying and examining the facts of their life; in the face of the opposition of the orthodox mass they tried to mould their lives and their character in accordance with the light they found as a result of their research. According to him, there was not the same divorce between a politician and a student which one saw in the Gandhi age. In the age of Ranade, a politician, who was not a student was treated as an intolerable nuisance, if not a danger. "The Gandhi age is an age in which people are returning to antiquity; they have ceased to think for themselves, ceased to read and exmaine the facts of their lives."[75]

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70. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 228.
71. Keer, op. cit., p. 191.
72. Ibid., p. 308.
73. Desai, *My Interviews*, p. 24.
74. Ambedkar, *Federation versus Freedom*, p. 153.
75. Ibid., p. 154.

SECTION 4 — ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Indian National Congress was the premier political organisation pledged to struggle for the emancipation of India from British imperialist domination. From its inception at Bombay in 1885, it launched massive struggles to achieve the independence of our country. It attracted towards its programme first the intelligentsia, then the workers and peasants. The Muslim League was getting organised from 1909 and was putting forth its separatist demands like separate electorates. The political reforms were always preceded by the political movements. India's march to freedom was getting stronger by consolidation of the forces which were scattered socially and economically.

The Social Reform Conference was not satisfied with the Congress attitude of completely dissociating itself from questions of social reform. The leadership of the Congress believed that there was need of social reform, but not from its platform. The Indian National Congress and the Social Reform Conference functioned as two parallel organisations, each developing itself according to its own particular aims and objects. The Social Reform Conference was an eyesore to the congressmen who belonged to the antisocial reform section. Ambedkar remarked that the opposition to the Social Reform Conference was headed by no other person than Tilak.[76]

The rise of Gandhiji as the leader of the Congress was the beginning of a new epoch. Not only political but social elevation became one of the programmes of the Congress. In its Calcutta session (1917) the resolution for removing untouchability was passed at the instance of Gandhiji. According to Ambedkar, the passing of the resolution for the removal of untouchability was entirely opposed to the declared policy of the Congress.

The Congress resolution was adopted due to the resolutions passed by the depressed classes in their two separate meetings. The first meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar in Bombay. Besides declaring loyalty to British government and praying for the victory of the allies (in

[76] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 6.

the first world war), the meeting prayed that the British government should grant the right to represent the depressed classes to the councils in proportion to their numbers; and the chairman was authorised to request the Congress to pass at its forthcoming session a distinct and independent resolution declaring to the people of India at large the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all the disabilities imposed by religion and custom upon the depressed classes.[77] The second meeting was held in November 1917 under the chairmanship of B. N. Bagade, a leader of the Non-Brahmin Party. This meeting also declared its loyalty to the British throne and gave no support to the Congress-League Scheme, and made it clear that the administration of India should be largely under the control of the British till all classes, especially the depressed classes, rose to a status to participate effectively in the administration of the country. This meeting prayed that government should grant the untouchables their own representation in the various legislative bodies to ensure to them their civil and political rights. This meeting gave its support to Bahishkrit Bharat Samaj and its deputation to be sent on its behalf to Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India.

In 1916 two schemes were in vogue. One was a scheme of the nineteen members of the Imperial Legislative Council, and the other was the Congress-League Scheme known as the Lucknow Pact. The Congress was keen on giving the Congress-League Scheme the status and character of a national demand. The depressed classes organised a demonstration against the Congress of 1895 in Poona and actually burned its effigy. But as a result of the influence of Justice Chandavarkar over the depressed classes a great section of the depressed classes agreed to give support to the Congress scheme.

The Congress Working Committee resolution (1922) requested the All-India Hindu Mahasabha to take up the work of abolishing untouchability and remove the evil from amidst the Hindu community. According to Ambedkar : "If there is anybody which is quite unfit for addressing itself to the problem of the untouchables it is the Hindu Mahasabha. It is not a social reform association. It is a purely political organisation whose main object and aims are to combat the influence of the Muslims in Indian politics."[78]

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[77] Ibid., p. 13.

According to Ambedkar, the woes of the untouchables were not due so much to bad laws as they were to the hostility of the administration, which was controlled by the Hindus who imported into administration their age-old prejudices against the untouchables. The untouchables would never hope to get protection from the police, justice from the judiciary or the benefit of the statutory law from the administration so long as the public services continued to be manned by Hindus. One of the grounds urged by the Congress for the noninclusion of representatives of the minorities in their cabinets was that a cabinet must be a party cabinet if it was to take collective responsibility. Minorities were included in the cabinet only when they were prepared to join the Congress and sign the pledge.[79] According to Ambedkar, it was a part of the Congress policy not to admit the right of the untouchables to be represented in the cabinet, and that this policy had the support of Gandhiji. He showed that amongst the candidates selected by the Congress for the legislature, the candidates from Brahmin and allied communities were the most highly educated; the candidates from non-Brahmins were moderately educated and those from the untouchables were just above literates. It was designed to allow none but the Brahmins and the allied castes to form the main part of the ministry and to secure for them the support of a docile unintelligent crowd of non-Brahmins and untouchables who would be no rivals but would be content to follow the lead for no other consideration except that of having been raised to the status of members of the legislatures.

Under the 1935 Act about 10 per cent of the population was given the right to vote. Ambedkar analysed the results of 1937 election, and came to the conclusion that Congress was not a majority party—the Congress not even obtained 50 per cent votes. Ambedkar remarked that there was no doubt that the Congress claim to represent all classes and communities was a

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78. Ibid., p. 21.
79. Ibid., p. 95.

hollow one with no foundation in fact. The system of joint electorates and reserved seats which was in operation was a system of two-member constituency. The Hindus under the Congress were so completely organised that there was no possibility of an electoral contest and consequent waste of votes. The result was that the system helped the Hindus to win the reserved seats and worked against the scheduled castes.[80]

The number of seats captured by a party was not always in proportion to the number of votes cast in favour of the party and often a party carried a majority of seats with a minority of votes. This was particularly true where the single-member constituency system prevailed as it did in India. Ambedkar showed that the untouchable candidates triumphed over the Congress because they got over 82 per cent votes of their community in the primary elections.

The Congress visualised a democratic form of government based on adult franchise with no safeguards for untouchables. Ambedkar remarked that if there were no guarantees to the untouchables, the result would be that the Hindu communal majority would not only capture legislature, the executive and the administration, but the legislature, the executive and the administration would be overrun by the Hindu communal majority and these powerful organs of the state, instead of protecting the minorities, would become the tools of the Hindu communal majority doing its bidding.[81] He maintained that the Hindu communal majority was the backbone of the Congress. It was made up of the Hindus and was fed by the Hindus. It was this majority which constituted the backbone of Congress, and the Congress, therefore, was bound to protect its rights. The social psychology of the Hindu communal majority was dominated by the dogma which recognised not merely inequality but graded inequality as the rule governing the interrelationship among the various communities. According to Ambedkar, "This dogma of graded inequality is absolutely inimical to liberty and fraternity."[82] He was of the opinion that the political safe-

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80. Ibid., p. 154.
81. Ibid., p. 177.
82. Ibid., p. 170.

guards to counteract the evil of graded inequality were guaranteed minimum representation in the legislature, the executive and the public services. He remarked that these demands of the scheduled castes were ridiculed by the Congress as "communalism" and the leaders of the untouchables were represented as "job-hunters".[83]

Ambedkar openly suggested to refer the dispute between Hindus and untouchables to an international board of arbitration. He had full faith in the British people. He remarked : "The untouchables see no reason why Indians should start with complete distrust of the British intentions."[84]

Ambedkar posed another important question : Whether untouchables were a separate element in the national life of India. He answered in the affirmative, "They are distinct and separate from Hindus."[85] The Congress answered this question in the negative.

European nationalities were Christian by religion, still they were different. Whites and negroes were both Christians, but they formed different communities. Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans followed the same religion, still they did not form one single community. Sikhs, Mazbi Sikhs, Samadasia Sikhs—all professed Sikhism, but it was accepted that they did not form one community.

According to Ambedkar, the Congress failed to realise that the fundamental issue for settling the question whether to grant or not to grant constitutional safeguards was union versus separation of a social group in the population. Muslims and Christians were given political recognition because they formed in fact separate elements from Hindus. He remarked : "Hindus and social union are incompatible. If Hindus wish to be one they will have to discard Hinduism... Hinduism is the greatest obstacle to Hindu unity."[86] The problem was to achieve liberty and, to a minority, equality from the hands of a hostile majority. Therefore essentially the problem of untouchables was fundamentally a political problem.

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83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., p. 201.
85. Ibid., p. 203.
86. Ibid., p. 206.

Hindus had to lose much by the abolition of untouchability. The system of untouchability was a gold mine to the Hindus. In this society there was a master class and a servile class. One-fourth of the population was untouchable and belonged to servile class. Untouchability was more than a religious system. It was an economic system which was worse than slavery. As an economic system it permitted exploitation without obligation. Untouchability was not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation but it was also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation. This was because there was no independent public opinion to condemn it and there was no impartial machinery of administration to restrain it. Hindus belonged to the exploiting class. Hindus gained economic advantage by perpetuating untouchability. Hindus had vested interests in perpetuating untouchability. And it was an established fact that vested interests had never been known to have willingly divested themselves unless there was sufficient force to compel them. This was how Ambedkar painted the picture of untouchables.

According to Ambedkar, swaraj instead of putting an end to untouchability might extend its life.[87] He thought that in swaraj the untouchables would get no privileges but the perpetuation of slavery.

Ambedkar criticised that the leftists and radical parties in Europe and America had been giving blind and unquestioned support to the Congress which was admittedly run by capitalists, landlords, moneylenders and reactionaries. The press correspondents of foreign journals were almost always from the Congress camp. He remarked that if the press correspondents were Americans, they were just anti-British, and for that reason pro-Congress. They were never interested in other political parties in India and never cared to understand their point of view. Therefore he appealed to the radicals of England and America. He remarked that far from being the friends of India they were a positive menace to the freedom of the Indian masses. A foreigner believed that the Congress had the representative character and it was fighting for India. But he maintained that the 1937 election showed that the Congress did not represent

[87] Ibid., p. 218.

the nation. The Congress started satyagraha, civil disobedience, etc., and the other parties were aloof from it. A foreigner never thought about the distinction between the freedom of the country and the freedom of the people in the country. India might become free but the people of India (like the untouchables) might not become free. He asked : "Is it necessary to tell them that to support Congress is to let tyranny have freedom to enslave?"[88]

According to Ambedkar, whether the Brahmins claimed themselves to be members of the governing class or not, the facts that they controlled the administration and that their supremacy was accepted by the servile classes were enough to establish the point.[89] He remarked that the governing class in India today was a Brahmin-Bania instead of Brahmin-Kshatriya combine as it used to be. This class would not disappear by the magic of swaraj. In proportion to their numbers the Brahmins had secured overwhelming representation. The representation of Banias was also overwhelming. He held that swaraj would not be government by the people; but it would be a government run by the governing class, and in the absence of government by the people, government for the people would be what the governing class would choose to make of it. Whenever the servile classes asked for reservations in the legislatures, the executive or the public services, the governing class raised the cry of "nationalism in danger". Far from sacrificing its privileges for nationalism, it was exploiting nationalism to preserve them.

According to Ambedkar, "the fight for freedom" led by the governing class was, from the point of view of the servile classes, a selfish struggle. The freedom which the governing class in India was struggling for was freedom to rule the servile classes. What it wanted was the freedom for the master race to rule the subject race which was nothing but the nazi or Nietzschean doctrine of freedom for superman to rule the common man. The governing class was aware that a political campaign based on class ideologies, class interests, class issues and class conflicts would toll its death knell. It knew that the most effective way of sidetracking the servile classes and fooling them was to play upon the sentiment of nationalism and national unity and realised that the Congress platform was the only platform that could most effectively safeguard the interests of the governing class. For if there was any platform from which all talk of conflict between rich and poor, Brahmin and non-Brahmin, landlord and tenant, creditor and debtor, which did not suit the governing class, was debarred, it was the Congress platform; it was not only bound to preach nationalism and national unity which was what the governing classes wanted and on which its safety entirely depended, but also prohibited the preaching of any other ideology inconsistent with nationalism from its platform. To Ambedkar the reservations demanded by the servile classes were really controls over the power of the governing classes.[90]

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[88] Ibid., p. 238.
[89] Ibid., p. 206.

Ambedkar refused to sign a statement which declared a vote of no-confidence in the interim ministry led by Sir Dhanjishah B. Cooper in Bombay in 1937. B. G. Kher demanded his signature on that statement. Ambedkar replied that there was no other point in the Congress demand but a move to raise its own prestige.[91] Answering the question why he did not join the interim ministry, he said that it was no use accepting office in a ministry which commanded no majority in the Assembly, and which was not likely to last long.[92] He regarded the independence of his community which was suppressed for thousands of years more valuable than joining the Congress. In the Kanpur session of the A. I. Scheduled Castes Federation in March 1944, he said: "Attempts to uplift my community rather than win the swaraj for the nation is my goal."[93]

A consistent anti-Congress trend is seen throughout the reasoning and the movements of Ambedkar. He once remarked that no untouchable became president of the Congress from 1885 to 1940. After the resignations of the Congress ministries in the first week of November 1939, Jinnah called on Muslims throughout India to observe the "Deliverance Day" on 22 December

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[90] Ibid., p. 234.
[91] Keer, op. cit., p. 291.
[92] Ibid., p. 292.
[93] *Dalitbandhu*, Special Number, 15 April 1948, p. 31.

1939. Ambedkar declared that he would like to join Jinnah in celebrating the Deliverance Day. He, however, explained that it was not an anti-Hindu move, it was anti-Congress, and therefore purely political.[94] He and his Independent Labour Party also participated in it. In a statement to the press, he suggested the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the cases of tyranny and oppression by the Congress ministries.

According to Ambedkar, two things produced a cleavage between the Muslim League and the Congress. They were firstly the refusal by the Congress to recognise the Muslim League as the only representative body of the Muslims, and secondly the refusal by the Congress to form coalition ministries in the Congress majority provinces in 1937. According to the Congress, the coalition cabinets were inconsistent with collective responsibility of the cabinets. The Muslim League refused to accept the above view. It meant that there was no collective responsibility in the Congress government. It was a government by the departments.

According to Ambedkar, the issue was: Were the Hindus to be a ruling race and the Muslims and other minorities to be subject races under swaraj? The Muslims and other minorities were not prepared to accept the position of subject races.[95] The Congress at its annual session at Ramgarh in April 1940 repudiated any attempt to divide India. Simultaneously the Muslim League at its annual session at Lahore passed a resolution demanding the creation of independent states in the north-western and eastern parts of India where Muslims were in a majority. When the Congress took over ministries in 1937 it saw a new force in the plan of the mass contact. It was intended to produce political unity between Hindus and Muslim masses by ignoring or circumventing the leaders of the Muslims. Ambedkar remarked that this "mad" plan of mass contact had a great deal to do with the emergence of Pakistan,[96] because it could not get over on the other side of the barrier, much less could it produce organic unity between Hindus and Muslims.[97]

The Congress and the Muslim League met in 1916 at Lucknow

[94] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 19 December 1939.

[95] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 28.

[96] Ibid., p. 338.

[97] Ibid., p. 339.

and their efforts were crowned with success. After the Congress accepted noncooperation, civil disobedience and boycott of councils, Jinnah left the Congress. In 1928 Jinnah joined the Congress in boycott of the Simon Commission. At that time, a section of the Muslims was prepared to join the Congress. Another section refused to cooperate. It rather preferred to depend upon the British. Only during the Khilafat agitation did the waters of the channels leave their appointed course and flow as one stream in one channel, but Ambedkar remarked, "Muslim politics never merged with Hindu current of politics."[98] To Ambedkar the policy of "Hindus for Hindustan" was not merely arrogant but was arrant nonsense. The appeasement policy adopted by Congress in dealing with the Muslim question aggravated it. The only remedy for it according to him was settlement. Ambedkar remarked, "If Pakistan is a settlement, it is a proposition worth consideration. As a settlement it will do away with this constant need of appeasement and ought to be welcomed by all."[99] He regarded that the minority problem would never be solved unless Gandhiji and the Congress gave up their egoistic and bankrupt attitude towards persons and parties outside the Congress.

K. Santhanam in his book *Ambedkar's Attack* has launched a powerful attack on Ambedkar. He characterised Ambedkar's book *Congress and Gandhi*, "as an incoherent jumble of incidents torn from their contexts, allegations unsupported by any evidence and sweeping conclusions devoid of rational justification, all strung together by one tenacious purpose, viz that whatever the Congress and Gandhiji have been doing and have done must be represented as wholly evil." He called Ambedkar a "laborious scholar" and remarked, "he wants to establish his own claim as the leader of the scheduled castes". Ambedkar was nominated as the member of the Viceroy's Council in July 1942. Santhanam remarked : "When hostility to the Congress became the main qualification for membership to the vacant seat, Dr Ambedkar got his chance on the eve of the great struggle of August 1942."

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98. Ibid., p. 333.
99. Ibid., pp. 260-61.

Ambedkar wrote his book *Congress and Gandhi* in 1945, i.e. when he was the member of Viceroy's Council; Santhanam blamed Ambedkar by saying "such propaganda is highly objectionable. And the members of the Executive Council, secure against popular disapproval, can prostitute their higher position to defame and vilify their political opponents."[100] Ambedkar's book was primarily intended for the readers in foreign countries. Throughout the book he has used the word "untouchable" for "he thought the words depressed class as degrading". Santhanam thought that his object was "to obtain some cheap sympathy from the foreigner". Ambedkar, the author, being a member of the Viceroy's Council, "the unwary foreigner is apt to think that his statements and allegations have official authority".[101]

Santhanam sharply attacked Ambedkar when he discussed the positions at the Round Table Conference in 1930-32. According to Santhanam, "the members of the conference were chosen for their hostility to Congress. Ambedkar's eminence was initially due to his hostility towards Congress and the idea has gripped him that it can last only so long as this hostility lasts, and so long as the British government backs him".[102] As regards Ambedkar's charge that Gandhiji has made a conspiracy against him, Santhanam remarked: "Conspiracy was made not by Gandhiji but against him and the Congress by the communalists nominated by the British government for exaggerating the communal claims." According to Santhanam, Gandhiji's view was that adult franchise combined with a powerful and moral social drive against untouchability was the true means of liberation.[103]

Ambedkar could not secure more seats in the legislatures of other provinces except Bombay. According to Santhanam, there were two reasons : either Dr Ambedkar had no colleagues in these provinces who could organise the scheduled castes in the same way as he had done in Bombay, or the Congress was able to persuade the scheduled castes that they had more to gain by throwing in their lot with the national organisation.[104]

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[100] K. Santhanam, *Ambedkar's Attack*, p. 3.
[101] Ibid., p. 4.
[102] Ibid., p. 25.
[103] Ibid., p. 34.
[104] Ibid.

In analysing the aims of the Congress and its reactions to the communal movements, C. Rajagopalachari remarked that the Congress aimed at establishing a democratic form of government. He characterised two fundamentals in a democracy: acceptance of the rule by majority and legal protection to every individual. To Rajaji swaraj was conceivable only in terms of democracy. He charged Ambedkar of delinking the scheduled castes from the Congress movement.[105]

In the election campaign of 1937, Ambedkar in a public meeting had denounced Congress as a tool in the hands of the capitalists; and remarked that it was behaving against the interests of workers and peasants.[106] In a conference of peasants at Mahad in 1938 he attacked Bombay ministry as a tool in the hands of Sardar Patel and Maharashtrian members of the Bombay legislature were like dogs in the houses of Gujarati capitalists and Sardar Patel. They were enemies of Maharashtra and the untouchables.[107]

Swami Sahajanand, the peasant leader from Bihar, saw Ambedkar at his residence in Bombay on 25 December 1938. He tried to persuade Ambedkar to join the Congress to form a united front against imperialism. Ambedkar replied that he would be glad to liquidate the Independent Labour Party and join the Congress Party if the Congress decided to fight imperialism. But he said that the Congress was using the constitutional machinery to advance the interests of the capitalists and other vested interests by sacrificing the interests of peasants and workers, and therefore he could not join such an organisation.[108]

Ambedkar charged that Nehru government and the Congress Party had failed to give to the people a pure and incorruptible administration. He accused the Congress of not providing food and clothing to the people; and said that the Congress failed to give to the people pure administration, free from corruption, bribery, nepotism and favouritism. What stood in its way, according to him, was the Congress itself, because it did not believe

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105. C. Rajagopalachari, *Ambedkar Refuted*, p. 8.
106. A. K. Ghorpade, *Life of Ambedkar*, p. 130.
107. Ibid., p. 133.
108. Keer, op. cit., p. 315.

in purity of administration. He charged that the Congress was being conducted on the basis of personal allegiance.[109]

SECTION 5 — PRINCELY STATES

The princely states, the pockets of British imperial interests, were the strongholds of reaction. The people's struggles became the normal feature in the daily life of states. The liberation struggles of Indian people in British India enthused the states' peoples to fight for political rights and independence.

In 1938, Gandhiji took a lead in the people's struggle of Rajkot state and he guided them in his own way. At the critical juncture, Ambedkar went to Rajkot and in a meeting of the depressed classes he urged them to carry on their struggle for political rights. In an interview he emphasised that the grant of responsible government to British India should not be made dependent on the eagerness or otherwise of the princes to join an all-India federation,[110] proposed to be set up under the Government of India Act, 1935.

The proposed federation was to be composed of Muslims, Hindus and princes. The Congress Party was not able to form its majority. Therefore it had to cooperate with the princes or the British. Ambedkar discussed various federal forms as seen in the USA, Switzerland, Canada and Australia. He put forth the difference between the Constitution of USA and the proposed Indian federation and remarked "The Constitution of USA originated in a compact but resulted in a union. The Indian federation originates in a compact, and continues a compact."[111]

The seats assigned to the states were to be filled by the princes by nomination and the seats assigned to British India were to be filled by election. The proposed federal legislature was therefore a heterogeneous legislature, partly elected and partly nominated.

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[109] *The Times of India*, 15 November 1956.

[110] Ibid., 23 January 1933.

[111] Ambedkar, *Federation versus Freedom*, p. 39.

Ambedkar commented: "The federation makes the princes the arbiters of our destiny. Without their consent India cannot politically advance."[112] As such the proposed federation would hinder the process of democratisation of Indian states.[113] The motive behind it was "to use the princes to support imperial interests and to curb the rising tide of democracy in India".[114] Muslims were interested in making the centre weak and giving residuary powers to the provinces. Accession of the princes was regarded by Hindusabhaites as an accretion to the Hindu strength. The commercial community behind the Congress claimed to displace Europeans from trade and commerce and take their place in the name of nationalism. Ambedkar remarked, "This federation will be a standing menace to the free man and an obstacle in the way of the poor man."[115]

About the resolution of the Congress on the proposed federation, Ambedkar remarked that there was no difference between the liberals and the Congress. The Congress could be called the leftwing of the Liberal Federation. But the liberals were honest. The Congress chastised the advocates of the acceptance of office as traitors; but it justified its action shamelessly that "the acceptance of office is to wreck the constitution". He remarked that they had been deceiving the people all the time.[116]

When the transfer of power was an urgent problem Travancore and Hyderabad states declared their independence after India attained the status of the dominion on 15 August 1947. Ambedkar advised the states to merge their sovereignty in the Indian union. Any effort to violate it was sure to result in the further balkanisation of India. He regarded the permission of the Draft Constitution to allow the states to maintain their own armies as "retrograde" and "harmful", because, he thought, it might lead to break the unity of India and overthrow the central government.[117] He remarked: "When the whole of sovereignty is transferred the territory of that particular ruler becomes the terri-

[112] Ibid., p. 126.
[113] Ibid., p. 140
[114] Ibid., p. 137.
[115] Ibid., p. 151.
[116] Keer, op. cit., p. 321.
[117] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 42.

tory of India, with complete sovereignty vested in the Indian Union."[118]

Ambedkar then discussed the question of paramountcy. He said that firstly paramountcy was merely another name for what is called the prerogative of the crown; secondly paramountcy being the prerogative of the king, the exercise of paramountcy was, contrary to the general opinion, not subject to the rules of international law but was subject to that part of the municipal law of the British empire which was called the law of the constitution; thirdly according to the principle of the constitutional law of the British empire, while the prerogative vested in the king, the king had no discretion in the exercise of his prerogative. The king could not exercise it independently of the advice of his ministers. When India became a dominion the crown would be bound to act in the exercise of its prerogative rights, i.e. paramountcy on the advice of the Indian cabinet. Constitutional law of the British empire made an important difference between responsible government and dominion status. In the case of dominion the crown was bound to accept the advice of the ministry in internal and external affairs. Ambedkar remarked that independent India could make a valid claim for the inheritance of paramountcy. While suzerainty remained they could never be independent. India would not recognise their independence nor a foreign state accord them the status of an independent state. The only way by which the Indian states could free themselves from paramountcy would be to bring about a merger of sovereignty or suzerainty. That could happen only when the states joined the Indian union as constituent units thereof. He further said that any dewan (e.g. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer) who advised his prince not to join the union was really acting as the enemy of princes. The union would guarantee to the princes the rights relating to dynastic succession which was the most that a prince could expect in these days. According to him, to be independent and to hope to get recognition and protection from the UNO was to live in one's own paradise.

Ambedkar said that he would ask the interim government at the centre to take the following steps:

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118. Ibid., pp. 459-61.

(1) To notify the British government that the British Parliament has no right to pass any law abrogating paramountcy and that any clause to that effect in the forthcoming legislation conferring dominion status on India would be treated by the people of India as repugnant to their sovereignty and therefore null and void.

(2) To declare that the government of India will never recognise any Indian state as sovereign independent state.

(3) To inform the UNO that admitting an Indian state which declares itself as sovereign independent state to its membership would meet with the strongest objection from the people of India as a violation of the sovereign rights of the union of India.[119]

Ambedkar upheld India's paramountcy and sovereignty with regard to princely states. His views on this issue were progressive and in line with the general nationalist sentiments of Indian people.

The procapitalist nature of the Congress was revealed to him. He declared that he would join Congress if it really launched any movement against imperialism (his reply to Sahajanand). But he never thought of launching any fight against imperialism; and therefore did not consolidate anti-imperialist forces in the country, but became the member of Viceroy's Executive Council. Liberalism or constitutionalism was the permanent feature of his policy.

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[119] A. C. Banerjee, *Making of the Indian Constitution*, pp. 486-94.

Chapter Seven

PROBLEMS OF MINORITIES AND PAKISTAN

SECTION 1 — PROBLEMS OF MINORITIES

The Constituent Assembly of India had to face two most urgent problems: the problem of minorities and the problem of Indian states. A memorandum was submitted to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation under the name "States and Minorities". In it Ambedkar outlined in details their rights and means to secure them in the constitution of free India. The memorandum defined fundamental rights, minority rights and safeguards for the scheduled castes. He interpreted them to mean that the scheduled castes were more than a minority and that any protection given to citizens and to minorities would not be adequate for scheduled castes. He maintained that the scheduled castes would require special safeguards against the tyranny and discrimination of the majority.[1]

Ambedkar has outlined the memorandum in the form of the constitution of the United States of India. In 21 articles he has summarised the fundamental rights, and afterwards he has mentioned the remedies against invasion of fundamental rights. He has stated judicial protection against the tyranny of the executive, against unequal treatment, discrimination and economic exploitation. As regards the protection of minorities, he has suggested protection against communal executive, social and official tyranny and social boycott. In the safeguards for the scheduled castes, he demanded guarantees for the rights of representation in the legislature. The method of election introduced by the Poona Pact would be abolished and in its place the system of separate electorates would be substituted. Adult franchise, the system of cumulative voting, right of representation in the executive and in the services and provision of higher education were the demands.

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[1] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, Preface.

Explaining the above provisions, Ambedkar outlined the features of the British or the parliamentary executive. He applied the same system to India and concluded that the British system of government by a cabinet of the majority party rested on the premise that the majority was a political majority. According to him, the majority in India was a communal majority. He thought that the introduction of the British type of executive would be full of menace to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of the minorities in general and of the untouchables in particular.[2]

According to Ambedkar, the administration of India was completely in the hands of the Hindus. It was their monopoly. They dominated the police, the magistracy and 'the revenue services, indeed any and every branch of administration. The Hindus in the administration had the same positive, antisocial, inimical attitude to the untouchables which the Hindus outside the administration had. The result was that the untouchables were placed between the Hindu population and the Hindu-ridden administration, the one committing wrongs against them and the other protecting the wrong-doers, instead of helping the victims. Ambedkar asked: What would be swaraj to the untouchables? According to him, it could only mean one thing—that while under British it was only the administration that was in the hands of the Hindus, under Swaraj the legislature and the executive would also be in the hands of the Hindus, and it would aggravate the sufferings of the untouchables.

The British system has given stable government to the British people. The question was: Would it produce a stable government in India? According to Ambedkar the chances were very slender. For it was the easiest thing for groups to align and realign themselves at frequent intervals for petty purposes to bring about the downfall of the government. The present solidarity of the major parties could not be expected to continue. To him, constant overthrow of government was nothing short of anarchy.

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2. Ibid., p. 36.

A form of executive was suggested by Ambedkar:

> "(1) to prevent the majority from forming a government without giving any opportunity to the minorities to have a say in the matter, (2) to prevent the majority from having exclusive control over administration and thereby make the tyranny of the minority by the majority impossible, (3) to prevent the inclusion by the majority party in the executive of the representatives of the minorities who have no confidence of the minorities, (4) to provide a stable executive necessary for good and efficient administration."

Finally he suggested the appointment of an officer to be called Superintendent of Minority Affairs.[3] According to him, things would be more worse under the system of joint electorates. The general elections had conclusively proved that the scheduled castes could be completely disenfranchised in a joint electorate. He said that the Simon Commission had observed that the device of the reserved seats ceases to be workable where the protected community constituted an exceeding small fraction of any manageable constituency.

The new method according to Ambedkar involved the abolition of the primary election as a needless and heavy encumbrance, and the substitution of separate electorates. The following five grounds against the institution of separate electorates for the scheduled castes were advanced; he commented on them thus:

(1) *The scheduled castes were not a minority.*

Social discrimination constituted the real test of determining whether a social group was or was not a minority. Gandhiji has given his opinion that the scheduled castes were the only real minority in India.

(2) *The scheduled castes were Hindus and therefore they could not have separate electorates.*

To make religious affiliation the determining factor for constitutional safeguards was to overlook the fact that the religious affiliation might be accompanied by an intense degree of social separation and discrimination. Muslims have been given separate electorates because the social relations between the Hindus and Musalmans are marked by social discrimination. What is decisive is not religious affiliation, but social separation.

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[3] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

(3) *Separate electorates would perpetuate untouchability.* Ambedkar remarked that this is futile.

(4) *Separate electorates were antinational.*

Nationalism and antinationalism have nothing to do with the electoral system. They were the results of extraelectoral forces.

(5) *Separate electorates enabled British imperialism to influence the communities to act against the interests of the country.*

This argument was nothing but escapism.[4]

About opponents Ambedkar said: (1) They failed to realise that the system of electorates had nothing to do with the religious nexus or communal nexus. (2) They failed to make any distinction between the demands for separate electorates by a majority community and a similar demand made by a minority community. From the above, the correct attitude seemed to him to be: (1) The system of electorates was a device for the protection of the minority; it must be left to the wishes of the minority to choose. (2) The majority being in a position to rule could have no voice in the determination of the system of electorates; the majority must look to the decision of the minority and abide by it. Clause eight of Poona Pact guaranteed to the scheduled castes fair representation in public services. According to him, the police and magistracy naturally loved their class more than their duty. Unfortunately for the minorities in India, Indian nationalism had developed a new doctrine which might be called the "divine right" of the majority to rule the minorities according to the wishes of the majority. Ambedkar contended that any claim for the sharing of power by the minority was called communalism, while monopolising the whole power by the majority was called nationalism.[5] His book *States and Minorities* maintained that the fundamental rights were of no use to the underdog in the absence of economic security.

Ambedkar, however, seemed to fear, and perhaps rightly, that communalism had such deep roots among Indians that for at least a number of years to come, politics in India would fail to cut across communal and caste divisions.[6]

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[4] Gandhi, *Harijan,* 21 October 1939.

[5] Ambedkar, op. cit., p. 46.

He advocated separate electorates at the time of the Round Table Conference but nationalist pressure and Gandhiji's fast unto death to cancel the Communal Award compelled him to accept the Poona Pact. He again came to his former position. The "sentimental blunder" (at the time of Gandhiji's fast) for which he repented most has been corrected by him in this memorandum. He criticised the role of minorities and majorities in the Constituent Assembly of India. He analysed their role and said that they have followed a wrong path. He thought that every majority must recognise the existence of minorities, and it was wrong to perpetuate them as minorities. He concluded that some day or other majorities and minorities must merge into one.[7]

SECTION 2 — PARTITION AND PAKISTAN

According to Ambedkar, the essence of Pakistan was the opposition to the establishment of one central government having supremacy over the whole of India. Pakistan contemplated two central governments. The Muslims felt that to accept one central government for the whole of India was to consent to place the Muslim provincial governments under a Hindu central government and to see the gain secured by the establishment of Muslim provinces lost by subjecting them to a Hindu government at the centre. The Muslim way of escape from the "tyranny" of a Hindu centre was to have no central government at all. The demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan was to create a monolithic state of the followers of Islam.

The brotherhood of Islam was not the universal brotherhood of man. It was brotherhood of Muslims for Muslims only.[8] According to him, what the Muslims were asking for was the creation of administrative areas which were ethnically more homo-

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6. Ibid., pp. 48-52.
7. Constituent Assembly Debates, 4 November 1948.
8. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 325.

geneous. The Muslims wanted these homogeneous administrative areas which were predominantly Muslim to be constituted into separate states because (a) the Muslims by themselves constituted a separate nation and desired to have a national homeland, and (b) experience showed that the Hindus wanted to use their majority to treat the Muslims as though they were second-class citizens in an alien state.[9]

In its Lahore session on 26 March 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution which contemplated that the areas in which Muslims predominated should be incorporated into independent states. According to the above resolution the contemplated federation embodied in the 1935 Act was totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and was altogether unacceptable to Muslim League. Any other plan would be acceptable only with the approval and consent of the Muslims. It must include the principle that constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign. To Ambedkar the use of the word "constituent units" indicated that what was contemplated was a federation. If that was so, then the use of the word sovereign as an attribute of the units was out of place. Federation of units and sovereignty of units were contradictory.[10] In the Lahore resolution it was declared that the Muslims of India were a separate nation. The basic idea was that nationality had a very intimate connection with the claim for selfgovernment. If the Muslims in India were a separate nation, then of course India was not a nation.

Ambedkar raised three objections to the above proposition: (1) There was more racial affinity between Madrasi Musalman and Madrasi Brahmin than there was between Madrasi Brahmin and Punjabi Brahmin. (2) Reliance was placed upon linguistic unity between Hindus and Muslims. Musalmans have no common language. Only in towns, Musalmans speak Urdu and the Hindus speak the language of the province. But in the countryside there was complete linguistic unity between Hindus and Musalmans. (3) It is not exclusively the land of the Hindus or Musalmans. But the political and religious antagonisms divided the Hindus and Musalmans far more sharply than the socalled common things that were able to bind them together. But in practice the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, could never forget and obliterate their past. Under these circumstances he concluded that, in the common historical antecedents, the Hindu view that the Hindus and Musalmans formed one nation fell to the ground.[11]

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[9] Ibid., p. 1.
[10] Ibid., p. 4.

According to Ambedkar, nationalism in relation to a nation should be based fundamentally on a strong feeling of social unity, and nationalism in relation to internationalism should be founded on human brotherhood. He emphasised that nationalism should not be tyranny and menace to any other community and country.

The Muslims first called themselves a community and afterwards they have come to style themselves a nation. In this connection two important things must be noted: (1) Difference between nationality and nationalism. Nationality meant: "Consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of that tie of kinship" and nationalism meant: "the desire for a separate national existence for those who are bound by this tie of kinship". (2) There cannot be nationalism without the feeling of nationality being in existence. Nationality did not in all cases produce nationalism: (a) It was a dynamic expression of the desire to live as a nation; (b) there must be territory which nationalism could occupy and make it a state, as well as a cultural home of the nation.[12] According to him, a community had a right to safeguards, but on the contrary, a nation had a right to demand separation. Muslims had developed a will to live as a nation. History showed that the theory of nationality was embedded in the democratic theory of the sovereignty of the will of a people.

To Ambedkar, the Communal Award allowed the Muslims to retain weightage and separate electorates to save them from the socalled tyranny of the Hindu majority,[13] and in addition gave them the statutory majority of seats in those provinces where they were a majority in the population. As a solution of the communal question in its "lesser intent" there was no inequity in the award on the ground that it gave weightage to the Mus-

11. Ibid., p. 19.
12. Ibid., p. 21.
13. Ibid., p. 24.

lim minorities in the Hindu-majority provinces. For it gave weightage also to Hindu minorities in Muslim-majority provinces. The Muslims in the Muslim provinces having been given both statutory majority and separate electorates, the Communal Award must be said to impose upon the Hindu minorities Muslim rule, which they could neither alter nor influence. This was what constituted the fundamental wrong in the Communal Award. He remarked that to allow a majority of one community to rule a minority of another community without requiring the majority to submit itself to the suffrage of the minority, especially when the minority demanded it, was to prevent democratic principles and to show callous disregard for the safety and security of the Hindu minorities.

Ambedkar considered the question of defence in three major items: (1) question of frontiers, (2) question of resources, and (3) question of armed forces.

Pakistan would not have a scientific border. But he contended that no country had a scientific border. It was no use insisting that any particular boundary was the safest. He maintained that modern technique had robbed natural frontiers of much of their former importance. Artificial fortifications could be created as barriers. The resources of Hindustan were far greater than the resources of Pakistan. So he concluded that the creation of Pakistan would not leave Hindustan in a weakened condition.

The fact that the fighting forces mostly came from areas included in Pakistan was revealed by the Simon Commission Report. But, he remarked that the contention that Pakistan produced soldiers, and Hindustan could not, was untenable. This was far from true.[14] The preponderance of the North-West Frontier Province in the armed forces was not before the 1857 Revolt. According to him, the division between martial and nonmartial classes was of course purely arbitrary and artificial. He said that it was as foolish as the Hindu theory of castes, making birth instead of worth the basis for recognition. He concluded that Pakistan could not weaken India in that respect.[15] He said further:

[14] Chaudhari, *Modern Review*, July 1930 to February 1931.

[15] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 62.

> "...Pakistan provinces are a drain on the provinces of Hindustan. Therefore instead of weakening, the defence of Hindustan will be definitely improved by it. The bulk of the amount spent over the Muslim army is contributed by Hindu provinces. How many Hindus are aware of this tragedy? How many know at whose cost this tragedy is being enacted? The surest way of putting an end to it is to allow the scheme of Pakistan to take effect. To oppose it is to buy a sure weapon of their own destruction. A safe army is better than a safe border."[16]

According to Ambedkar, the communal statutory majority, based on separate electorates, and the communal provinces specially constituted to enable the statutory majority to tyrannise minority were the two evils which composed what was called the communal problem. In short, the problem existed and would exist whenever a hostile majority was brought face to face with a hostile minority. He found a parallel in the history of other countries. The position of the Hindus in Pakistan might easily become similar to the position of the Armenians under the Turks or of the Jews in tsarist Russia or in nazi Germany. He remarked if Pakistan was made a single unified ethnic state the evils would automatically vanish. The question of separate electorates would vanish for ever.[17] According to him, Muslims in Hindustan would not be weakened by the separation of the Muslim-majority provinces. Germany as an outside state was better able to protect the Sudetan Germans in Czechoslovakia than the Sudetans were able to do themselves. By the creation of Pakistan the bonds between the Muslims of the North and the East and the Muslims of Hindustan would be severed. That would be an additional gain to the Hindus. Similarly Pakistan would free the Hindus from the turbulence of Muslims as predominant partners.

According to Ambedkar, the high-caste Hindus had a trait of character which often led Hindus to disaster. This trait was formed by their acquisitive instinct and aversion to share with others the good things of life. They had a monopoly of educa-

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16. Ibid., p. 87.
17. Ibid., p. 99.

tion and wealth, and with wealth and education they have captured the caste. Charged with this selfish idea of class domination they did their best to exclude the lower classes of Hindus from wealth, education and power, and taught the lower classes that their duty in life was only to serve the higher classes. The other trait of high-caste Hindus was to exclude other classes from place and power. They would mete out similar treatment to Muslims even. This must be understood if we try to understand the politics of that class. Ambedkar here displayed his usual hatred of the high-caste Hindus. He concluded that the high-caste Hindus might oppose Pakistan for no other reason than that it limited the field for their selfseeking careers. The high-caste Hindus might cheat lower orders of the Hindus in the name of nationalism; but they could not cheat the Muslim majorities in the Muslim provinces and keep their monopoly of place and power.[18] The national movement born during the partition of Bengal and its antigovernment character were looked upon by Ambedkar as the selfish manoeuvres of the high-caste Hindus.

The opposition to Muslim League politics came from the Hindu Mahasabha. From its inception it began to outline the programme which was in practice meant to counteract the manoeuvres of the Muslim League.

According to Ambedkar, Hindu religion could not become a missionary religion like Islam or Christianity. It was not a proselytising religion. Hinduism perforce ceased to be a missionary religion from the time Hindu society developed its system of castes. For caste was incompatible with conversion.

According to Savarkar, Hindus were a nation by themselves. Therefore Savarkar and Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the question of one nation or two nations were in complete agreement. Ambedkar brought forth the contradiction between the premises of Savarkar. Savarkar admitted that the Muslims were a separate nation, but refused the claim of the Muslim nation for a national home.[19] According to Ambedkar, if Hindu raj did become a fact, it would no doubt be the greatest calamity for this country. No matter what the Hindus said, Hinduism was a menace to liberty, equality and fraternity. On that account it was incompatible with democracy. He said that Hindu raj must be prevented at any cost. The lower orders of Hindu society would be more ready to make common cause with Muslims for achieving common ends than they would with the high-caste Hindus who have denied and deprived them of ordinary human rights for centuries. To him, partition as a remedy against Hindu raj was worse than useless.[20]

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[18] Ibid., p. 107.
[19] Ibid., p. 133.

A wave of Hindu-Muslim riots swept over the nation since 1927. There were murderous outrages committed by members of one community against persons belonging to other community. Hindu-Muslim relations in the period of 1920-40, if scrutinised, lead to the conclusion that "it is a civil war between the Hindus and the Muslims in India". Ambedkar said, "it was interrupted by brief intervals of armed peace". According to the report of Simon Commission, "Communal riots were a manifestation of the anxieties and ambitions aroused in both the communities by the prospect of India's political future."[21]

Amidst these communal dissensions and disturbances. Gandhiji was always advocating Hindu-Muslim unity. According to Ambedkar it was "frantic efforts". The possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity was based on two premises : (1) general belief in the efficacy of a central government to mould a diverse set of people into one nation, and (2) the general feeling that the satisfaction of Muslim demands would be a sure means of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. The first was the evergrowing catalogue of Muslim political demands. The second thing was the spirit of exploiting the weaknesses of the Hindus and the third thing was the adoption of gangster methods in politics. To Ambedkar, gangsterism meant vandalism. By it social and political rights were secured on a large scale. In this matter they imitated the Sudetan Germans. Taking all these facts into consideration Ambedkar remarked : "The Muslim proposal to Pakistan is not a bargaining manoeuvre."[22] Muslim alternative to Pakistan was very dangerous, i.e. Muslim dominance in every field. He regarded that the policy of concession (i.e. appeasement) had increased Muslim aggressiveness and Muslims interpreted these concessions as a sign of defeat of Hindus and the absence of the will to resist.[23]

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[20] Ibid., p. 358.

[21] Ibid., pp. 179-80.

[22] Ibid., p. 187.

Ambedkar summarised the actions and reactions of the political forces during the three decades, i.e. second, third and fourth, as "a malaise exhibited in three ways : (1) social stagnation, (2) communal aggression and (3) national frustration of political destiny".[24] He valued social reform movement, but he felt sorry that it was not seen in Muslim community. The usual answer was that Muslim community was not progressive. There was no organised movement for social reform among them. Under these circumstances the Muslim community became stagnant. The basis of the politics of Muslim politicians was rivalry and continued rivalry which marred the social progress of the Muslim community. The Hindu-Muslim conflict as the basis of politics was an accepted fact during the thirties of the twentieth century. Though the spirit of independence was growing, the communal bitterness was also growing. Jinnah held an adulterous and a fallen Musalman to be better than Gandhiji.[25]

According to Ambedkar, Pakistan rested upon the distinction between a community and a nation : "a community has a right to safeguard; a nation has a right to demand separation".[26] So the two-nation theory had the justification of demanding separation from Hindus.

The ideological transformation of Muslim leaders was attributed by Ambedkar to their goal of Pakistan which opened up the possibilities of realising the Muslim dream of linking up all the Muslim kindred in one Islamic state. According to him, there was the virus of dualism in the two-nation theory. He remarked, "It is a positive disintegration of society and country."[27] By

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23. Ibid., p. 261.
24. Ibid., p. 213.
25. Ibid., p. 296.
26. Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, pp. 646-48.
27. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 349.

adopting Pakistan as the goal, the Muslims had forgotten the struggle against the British.

Selfdetermination meant the right to establish a form of government in accordance with the wishes of the people. According to Ambedkar, "It has meant the right to obtain national independence from an alien race irrespective of the form of government."[28] The claim of Pakistan was said to be founded on the principle of selfdetermination. The selfdetermination must be by the people. The demand of selfdetermination was claimed by the Muslim League for the benefit of India. At the same time, the League was opposed to selfdetermination being applied to Palestine. The principle of selfdetermination had no imperative character, because "selfdetermination is not a universal principle at all".[29] It was not absolute at all. It was to be considered in the light of many factors like language, religion, land and geographical elements.

According to Ambedkar, there were two methods of protecting the minorities. One was to provide safeguards for minorities and the other was to provide for the transfer of Hindu population from Pakistan. If the boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal were redrawn the question of transfer of population would come in a marked way.

To Ambedkar those who scoffed at the idea of transfer of population must study the history of the minority problem as it arose between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. The transfer of minorities was the only lasting remedy for communal peace. By it, bargaining for safeguards would be unnecessary. The only way to make India homogeneous was to arrange for exchange of population. Until this is done, it must be admitted that even with the creation of Pakistan, the problem of majority versus minority would remain and would continue to produce disharmony in the body politic of Hindustan. He said that the question of transfer of population could be successfully tackled by a commission with equal members of both communities.

Ambedkar outlined what he described as the *Skeleton Act of* the Government of India (Preliminary Provisions Act.) It was a specimen. The main premises of the act were as follows: (1) A poll of Muslims and non-Muslims be taken for or against separation. If the majority of Muslims were in favour of separation and a majority of non-Muslims were against separation, steps must be taken to delimit the areas wherever it was possible by redrawing provincial boundaries on ethnic and cultural lines by separating the Muslim-majority districts from the districts in which the majority consisted of non-Muslims. (2) A boundary commission should be set up. It is better if it was an international commission. (3) Partition of the country—Hindustan and Pakistan.

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[28] Ibid., p. 369.
[29] Ibid.

Other major considerations, according to Ambedkar, were as follows:

(1) A minority has no right to put a veto on the right of the majority to decide on questions of ultimate destiny. This was the reason why the referendum on the establishment of Pakistan was confined to Muslims only.

(2) A communal majority could demand of a communal minority to submit to its dictates. Only a political majority might be permitted to rule a political minority.[30]

Ambedkar agreed for a separate referendum of non-Muslims only to decide whether they preferred to stay in Pakistan or come into Hindustan. He had kept the door open and provided for the following possibilities in the act: (1) for union for ten years and then separation and (2) for separation for ten years and union thereafter. Of these two alternatives, he preferred the second alternative. It would be much better that the Musalmans should have the experience of Pakistan, but live contact between the two nations was an essential thing. In Ambedkar's scheme a council was provided. It should not be mistaken for a federation. It was not even a confederation. It could be used as a coupling between Hindustan and Pakistan.

Ambedkar's plan was based on a communitywise plebiscite. The scheme was not a divorce, but it was only a judicial separation of Hindustan and Pakistan. Cripps took the province as the deciding unit. To Ambedkar it was a wrong basis. The dispute regarding Pakistan was an intercommunal problem which had involved two communities in the same province.

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[30] Ibid., pp. 384-90.

According to Ambedkar, his plan could be brought out in three ways: (1) The British government should act as the deciding authority; (2) the Hindus and the Muslims should agree to submit the issue to an international board of arbitration; and (3) fight it out by a civil war. A referendum by people in the Pakistan provinces was the safest and the most constitutional method of solving the problem of Pakistan.

Ambedkar thought that the contumacy and obstinacy shown by Jinnah in refusing to declare the boundaries of Pakistan was unforgivable in a statesman. The concept of a subnation was unheard of. It was not only an ingenious concept but it was also a preposterous one. The relations between a nation and subnation were no higher than the relations which subsisted between a man and his chattels, or between property and its incidents. Chattels go with the owner, incidents go with property, so a subnation goes with a nation. Such was the chain of reasoning in Jinnah's argument.

Ambedkar remarked that it was difficult to understand how Gandhiji being so blind as not to see how Jinnah's influence over the Muslim masses had been growing day by day and how he had engaged himself in mobilising all his forces for battle. Never before was Jinnah a man for the masses. Jinnah wanted the Congress to restrict its membership to matriculates. He distrusted the masses. To exclude them from political power he was always for a high franchise. Jinnah was never known to be a very devout, pious or a professing Muslim. Besides kissing the Holy Koran as and when he was sworn in as an MLA, he did not appear to have bothered much about its contents, or its special tenets. It was doubtful if he frequented any mosque either out of curiosity or religious fervour. Jinnah was never found in the midst of Muslim mass congregations, religious or political. But he had become a man of the masses. He was no longer above them. He was among them. He had not only become a believer in Islam, but was prepared to die for Islam. Afterwards he knew more of Islam than mere kalama.[31]

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[31] Ibid., p. 409.

India was partitioned into India and Pakistan on 15 August 1947. The reorganisation of states became imminent, and the States Reorganisation Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Fazl Ali. In his evidence before the commission, Ambedkar stated : "I was glad that India was separated from Pakistan. I was the philosopher, so to say, of Pakistan. I advocated partition, because I felt that it was only by partition that Hindus would not only be independent but free."[32]

After partition the question of the untouchables in Pakistan became precarious. Ambedkar issued a statement and in it he urged untouchables in Pakistan and Hyderabad (Sind) to come to India.[33] Another important thing he did was that he tried to persuade Pandit Nehru to appoint an officer to look after the interest of untouchables in Pakistan. For that purpose he suggested the name of Bhaurao Gaekwad. In a letter to Pandit Nehru on 18 December 1947 he wrote that the Pakistan government was prohibiting the untouchables from coming to India. He remarked that the object behind all this must be to employ landless labour for the landlords.[34]

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[32] Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 12.

[33] *Dalitbandhu*, Special Number, p. 38.

[34] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 255.

Chapter Eight

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Western writers on democracy believed that what was necessary for the realisation of the ideal of democracy, viz government of the people, by the people and for the people, was the establishment of universal adult suffrage. Adult suffrage could produce government of the people in the logical sense of the phrase, i.e. in contrast to the government of a king, but it could not by itself be said to bring about a democratic government in the sense of government by the people and for the people.[1]

Ambedkar criticised the views of western writers on politics regarding democracy and selfgovernment. He said :

> "(1) They omit to take into account the incontrovertible fact that in every country there is a governing class. (2) They fail to realise that the resistance of a governing class is inconsistent with democracy and selfgovernment. (3) Selfgovernment and democracy become real when the governing class loses its power to capture the power to govern. (4) The governing class may be so well entrenched that the servile classes will need other safeguards besides adult suffrage to achieve the same end. (5) Social outlook and social philosophy of the governing class is not taken into account."[2]

According to him, parliamentary democracy meant "one man one vote". It was also meant that every government should be on the anvil both in its daily affairs and also at the end of a certain period when the voters and the electorate would be given an opportunity to assess the work done by the government.[3]

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[1] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 298.

[2] Ibid., p. 300.

[3] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 535.

According to Ambedkar, democracy always changed its form. Indian democracy was quite different from American democracy. Even in the same country democracy was not always the same. English democracy before and after 1688 was different. He stressed the point that democracy always changed in purpose also. He defined democracy as "a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed".[4] He summarised the conditions precedent to the successful working of democracy. They were as follows : (1) There should not be glaring inequalities in society, i.e. privileges for one class; (2) the existence of an opposition; (3) equality in law and administration; (4) observance of constitutional morality; (5) no tyranny of the majority; (6) moral order of society; and (7) public conscience.

Ambedkar's aim was to get justice and freedom for the people. To him "democracy is a mode of associated living". He regarded that the roots of democracy were to be found in social relationship, in terms of the associated life between the people who formed the society. Poverty, illiteracy and caste distinctions were the positive dangers to democracy.[5]

In his conception of democracy there should not be any class structure in society, because "in a class structure there is on the one hand tyranny, vanity, pride, arrogance, greed, selfishness, and on the other insecurity, poverty, degradation, loss of liberty, selfreliance, independence, dignity and selfrespect".[6] He regarded democracy in its practical aspect as the social organisation of the people in the sense that the people included all members of society. He remarked : "A democratic society must assure a life of leisure and culture to each one of its citizens."[7] The main concern of his life was to make democracy safe for the common man and for the good of his country. He regarded that the democratic principles of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness were essentials in human life. He gave prime importance to human rights.[8] He was keen that every member of society must share in exercising them. He was of opinion that there should not be any kind of discrimination in the exercise of human rights, because it would be a negation of social and political democracy. He attached more importance to the freedom to form associations in various fields of life. For that he sought help of a constitutional system, because he regarded that there was no freedom without constitutional government. According to him, such institutions were the very soul of freedom and democracy.[9]

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[4] Ambedkar, *Parliamentary Democracy*, p. 6.

[5] Keer, op. cit., p. 488.

[6] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 296.

[7] Ibid., p. 295.

According to Ambedkar, democracy was not a form of government but a form of social organisation.[10] He regarded that a favourable social setting was a prerequisite for the success of democracy, without it democracy would not last long. A democratic form of government presupposed a democratic form of society. The formal framework of democracy was of no value and would be a misfit if there was no social democracy. He remarked that the politicians never realised that democracy was not only a form of government; it was essentially a form of society.

To him, social democracy involved two things : an attitude of mind, an attitude of respect and equality towards their fellows and a social organisation free from rigid social barriers. To him, democracy was incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness resulting in the distinction between the privileged and unprivileged. He wanted high political objectives, but they must keep harmony with social aims. He regarded democracy as both a social ideal and a political method.

According to him, political democracy rested on four premises : (1) The individual is an end in himself; (2) the individual has certain inalienable rights which must be guaranteed to him by the constitution; (3) the individual shall not be required to relinquish any of his constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of a privilege; (4) the state shall not delegate powers to private persons to govern others. In democracy every party has right to criticise and capture political power. The party in power tries to keep the power in its hands. According to him, the real test of the party system would come when the governmental power might shift from the ruling party to some other political party or parties.

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[8] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 3.

[9] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 36.

[10] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 32.

According to him, laws are made by man for man. Law has not created man, but man has created law for his own happiness.[11] Law might require amendments, and these amendments should be made with the consent of all men. He emphasised the point that law must be the same for all and in the interest of all. It must be social and human, i.e. universal in its effect.[12] In his conception of law, it is implied that law should be enforced not only by punishment, but also by education—by an appeal of the mind of man and the spirit of society.

According to him, the Preamble of the Constitution of India has enunciated the principles on which law should be based. His thoughts on constitutional law are based on the dignity of mankind. It has five fundamental human elements : (1) It is a rule in public interest; (2) it is not an arbitrary force; (3) it is secular law applicable to all; (4) it is not divinely inspired, but it is man-inspired; (5) it can be changed, according to time and need.

Ambedkar regarded democracy as a way of life. It involved rational empiricism, emphasis on the individual, the instrumental nature of the state, voluntarism, the law behind the law, nobility of means, discussion and consent, absence of perpetual rule, and basic equality in all human relations. He held that a democratic way of life could be conceived without an ideal society. According to him, "An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. In other words, there must be social endosmosis."[13]

According to him, certain political rights alone did not constitute the basis of democracy. Sociability and morality were the important elements of his concept of democracy. The keynote of his concept of democracy as a way of life was the necessity for the participation of every human being in the formation of

11. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, pp. 77-86.
12. Ambedkar, *Parliamentary Democracy*, p. 3.
13. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 38.

social, economic and political values that regulated the living men and kept them together. The fundamental elements of his concept of democracy, in short, were liberty, equality, fraternity, reason, human experience, the rule of law, natural rights and an emphasis on the individual in social relationships.

According to Ambedkar, the following devices were essential to maintain democracy. (1) *Constitutional methods* : He insisted on abandoning the bloody methods of revolution and the methods of civil disobedience, noncooperation and satyagraha. He regarded these methods as "grammar of anarchy". (2) *Not to lay liberties at the feet of a great man* : According to him, there was nothing wrong in being grateful to great men. He regarded bhakti in religion a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, bhakti or hero-worship was a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.[14] (3) *Make a political democracy a social democracy* : Political democracy could not last unless there lay at the base of it social democracy. To him, it meant a way of life which recognised liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. They formed a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other was to defeat the very purpose of democracy. He said, "On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality",[15] "in politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality".[16] He urged to remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or "else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy".[17] The Constitution of India has laid down the idea of economic democracy. To Ambedkar, the directive principles had a great value, for they laid down that "our ideal is economic democracy".[18]

The success of democracy in India depended upon the satisfaction of the millions of people who were devoid of preliminaries of life. The discontent against parliamentary democracy was due to "the realisation that it has failed to assure the masses the right to liberty, property or pursuit of happiness".[19] But unfortunately parliamentary democracy in India took no notice of economic inequalities and did not care to examine the result of freedom of contract. It has failed to realise and feel that it could not succeed where there was no social and economic democracy, because they were the tissue and the fibre of political democracy.

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[14] CA Debates, Vol. XI, p. 979.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 494.

Ambedkar maintained that political societies were divided into two classes : the rulers and the ruled. Rulers were always drawn from the ruling class. This was why a political democracy could not become "a government of the people or by the people". He warned the wharfingers of democracy, that if it failed in this land, "the result will be rebellion, anarchy and communism."

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[19] Ambedkar, Address to AITU Camp, Delhi, 17 September 1948.

Chapter Nine

SOCIALIST THOUGHT

SECTION 1—TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Major Attlee (a member of the Simon Commission) pointed out that the depressed classes were also labourers and enquired how the witness (Ambedkar) could get over the difficulty of their being voters both as labourers and as depressed class men. Ambedkar said that almost all depressed class men were labourers, but in the textile industry, for instance, they were engaged exclusively in certain departments. The workers from the depressed classes were not allowed to work in any higher paid departments like weaving in textile mills. A question was asked : If every minority would thus to have excessive representation, where would the majority be? Ambedkar replied that the division then would be between capitalists and labourers.[1]

The general strike in textile mills in Bombay in 1928 failed and the second strike was launched in April 1929. Ambedkar co-operated with the first but opposed the second strike. During the strike the labour union was persuaded to recognise the claim of the untouchables and put this forward as a grievance but the employers snubbed them because of untouchability.

Ambedkar said that the weapon of the strike should be used sparingly. The condition of the depressed class workers had worsened, because they were in the grip of the creditors and moneylenders. He remarked that they had two enemies : Brahminism and capitalism.

The Industrial Disputes Bill, introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council (1938), was meant to make provision for the promotion of peaceful and amicable settlement of industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration. According to Ambedkar, "a strike is nothing more than a breach of contract of service. This may be a civil wrong or a crime."[2] He regarded it only a civil wrong, and not a crime. A strike was simply another name for the right to freedom. He contended that the bill, by penalising a strike, was reducing the workers to a state of slavery and nothing else.[3] He described the bill as "The Workers' Civil Liberties Suspension Act".[4] This bill was reactionary and retrograde, and was described as "a mockery of democracy".[5] He called the bill "bad, bloody and brutal".[6]

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[1] Indian Annual Register (July-December 1928), Vol. II, pp. 94-97.

The opposition parties in Bombay province opposed the bill. To organise the support of the workers they declared a strike of workers on 7 November 1938. About 60 trade union organisations in Bombay gave a call of a general strike to protest this act. Ambedkar and communists supported the strike. The Congress Socialists refused their support as they thought that Ambedkar was using the strike to strengthen his party. S. K. Patil, the Congress leader, arranged antistrike meetings.

It was the first successful strike launched against a popular government by labour leaders in the teeth of opposition from the vested interests. It was a united front with the communists. The communist leaders were criticised for making common cause with the "communal" leaders like Ambedkar and Jamnadas Mehta. This was the first and last occasion of Ambedkar and communists coming together for one joint action against the vested interests.

SECTION 2—LABOUR PROBLEMS FACED AS A LABOUR MEMBER

Ambedkar accepted the post of Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council with a view to capture the posts of authority. "If it is not done", he said, "then the untouchables will not be a ruling race."[7] He made it clear that he would endeavour to see that no restraint was placed on liberties of any class of people for all time. In all battles between the owners and workers, he assured that he would be on the side of labour.[8]

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[2] Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates, 1938, Vol. IV, p. 1334.

[3] Ibid., pp. 1336-38.

[4] Ibid., pp. 1340-42.

[5] Ibid., p. 1345.

[6] Ibid., p. 1359.

Ambedkar as a Labour Member was successful in reserving 5 to 6 per cent posts for untouchables in central government. He helped the untouchable students wishing to take technical education in foreign countries. He favoured joint labour-management committees at least in factories and industrial units employed in war work. The employment exchange was set up in the interests of labourers, so that the skilled and semiskilled labour technicians that were being trained under different schemes should not be thrown out on the streets; they should find new avenues of employment.[9]

In a Bombay meeting on 10 May 1943, he deplored the unfortunate split in the ranks of the labour movement and observed that in his opinion the Indian labour movement was hollow and most superfluous. He said further that labour ought to work for the establishment of labour government in India. To him, it was not enough that India should get swaraj; it was more important in whose hands that swaraj would be.[10]

He took another step to better the lot of labourers. He moved an amending bill proposing holidays with pay for industrial workers employed in perennial factories. He visualised that the compulsory conciliation or arbitration was a great advantage to labour and hoped to make that principle a permanent feature in the labour code.[11]

In his presidential address to the Seventh Indian Labour Conference which met on 27 November 1945, he observed :

> "Labour may ask the moneyed classes a pertinent question saying, 'If you do not mind paying taxes to meet the expenditure on war, why do you object to raising the funds when their purpose is to raise the labour standard?' How many un-

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[7] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 214.
[8] *The Times of India*, 27 July 1942.
[9] CA Debates, Vol. IX, p. 877.
[10] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 17.
[11] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, pp. 7 & 8.

educated persons could have been educated and how many sick persons could have been restored to health, if the money spent on war had been spent on public welfare?"[12]

In his inaugural address of the Conference of the Regional Labour Commissioners, Ambedkar said that three things were necessary to mitigate or prevent industrial disorder, viz a machinery for conciliation, and amendment in the Trades Disputes Act, and minimum wage legislation. He said that the first was already in operation, and he hoped to put forth proposals for the remaining two before long. According to him, industrial peace was a hopeful proposition if it was based on social justice. It was possible to get it on the basis of law, but not certain, but it was no longer a possibility if it was based on power.

While discussing the labour problems Ambedkar had in his mind not only industrial labour, but also agricultural labour. According to him, similar conditions of work, provident funds, employer's liability, workmen's compensation, health insurance including invalidity pensions should be open to all sorts of labour, whether it was industrial labour or agricultural labour.[13]

SECTION 3—MARXISM VERSUS BUDDHISM

Marxism approaches the study of history in order to trace the natural laws which run through all human history, and for this purpose it looks not at individuals, but at peoples, i.e. at classes. Ambedkar differed from the Marxists in this respect. But nonetheless he was of the opinion that possession of private property was the cause of exploitation.

In the Constituent Assembly of India criticism was levelled against the socalled socialistic formulations of the constitution. Lokanath Misra criticised that there would be a ruling class in the country. Jadubans Sahay said that the aim of classless society, as propounded by Gandhiji and not by Marx, was not incorporated in the constitution. Ambedkar replied to the debate. In his speech he said, "political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are not only beasts of burden, but also beasts of prey".[14] He said further that the downtrodden classes must not be allowed to devolve into a class struggle or class war. He laid emphasis on equality and fraternity in all spheres of life. According to him, the recognition of the class structure of society and the income structure of society as sacrosanct were utterly undemocratic and unrealistic. It set in motion influences which were harmful to rational human relationships. There were no common interests. According to him, "The isolation and exclusiveness following upon the class structure creates in the privileged classes the anti-social spirit of a gang."[15] Practically speaking, we have as a consequence of the difference between the classes and the masses, tyranny, vanity, pride, arrogance, greed, selfishness on the one hand, and insecurity, poverty, degradation, loss of liberty, selfreliance, dignity and selfrespect on the other. Ambedkar denounced the sanctity of the class structure of society.

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[12] Keer, op. cit., p. 372.

[13] CA Debates, Vol. IX, pp. 944-45.

Ambedkar stood for the poorer sections of Indian society. He condemned everything that extolled poverty. His idea of socialism was an attack on poverty. He realised the evil results of machinery and he attributed them to wrong social organisation which has made private property and pursuit of personal gain matters of absolute sanctity. According to him, "the remedy is not to condemn machinery and civilisation, but to alter the organisation of society so that the benefits will not be usurped by the few but will accrue to all".[16] He emphasised that machinery and modern civilisation were beneficial to all. He declared, "the slogan of a democratic society must be machinery and more machinery, civilisation and more civilisation".[17]

Ambedkar's emphasis on the rational basis of economic relationship involved two fundamental concepts : the "concept of state socialism" and "the concept of constitutional law and parliamentary democracy". He maintained that to come out of the present economic crisis some sort of "state control" was necessary. He stated that the main idea behind this "state social-

[14] Ibid., Vol. XI, pp. 975-80.

[15] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 296.

[16] Ibid., p. 294.

[17] Ibid., p. 295.

ism" was to put "an obligation on the state to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to the highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth".[18]

Ambedkar was against complete "statisation of economy" and "state monopoly". His idea of state ownership was limited to "agricultural land" with a democratic "collectivised method of cultivation" and a form of state socialism in the field of industry, including among other things, the nationalisation of insurance companies. He did not want the suppression of private property. According to him, state socialism was necessary from the viewpoint of public welfare and state economy. He thought that it would help rapid industrialisation of India. "Consolidation of holdings" and "tenancy legislation" would not, he regarded, benefit landless labourers, including the servile classes, the Shudras and untouchables; only collective farms could help them, provided agriculture becomes a "state industry".[19] Through his conception of collectivism ran one common thread—to make democratic socialism more real by broadening the application of democratic principles from the political to the nonpolitical areas of human society. He tried to keep balance between state control and private enterprise through his rational approach of state socialism.

Ambedkar wanted to establish state socialism without abrogating parliamentary democracy. According to him, one essential condition for the success of planned economy was that it must not be liable to suspension or abandonment; it must be a permanent feature of the economy. He remarked, "Those who want the economic structure of society to be modelled on state socialism must realise that they cannot leave the fulfilment of so fundamental a purpose to the exigencies of ordinary law." He emphasised that parliamentary democracy must be retained and state socialism must be prescribed by the law of the constitution, so that it would be beyond the reach of a parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate. "It is only by this that one can achieve the triple object : namely, to establish state socialism, retain parliamentary democracy and avoid dictatorship."[20] He added that the laws of the constitution should not only prescribe the shape and form of the political structure, but also must prescribe the shape and form of the economic structure of the society. In short, he proposed state socialism in important fields of economic life. He thought that state socialism was essential for the rapid industrialisation of India. Private enterprise could not do it and, if it did, it would produce those inequalities of wealth which private capitalism has produced in Europe and which should be a warning to Indians. The establishment of state socialism should not depend on the will of the legislature. It is to be established by the law of the constitution and thus make it unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive.

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[18] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 30.

[19] Ibid., p. 15.

Ambedkar did not believe in the annihilation of moneyed classes, but he wanted a radical change in their attitude towards human affairs. The moneyed classes suffered from an unlimited sense of property and possession. He wanted to curb it. He thought that labourers should not feel that they were servants of the propertied classes. He remarked that labourers might ask the moneyed classes a pertinent question : "If you do not mind paying taxes to meet the expenditure on war, why do you object to raising funds when their purpose is to raise the labour standard?"[21]

The idea of trusteeship was regarded by Ambedkar as "ridiculous". He did not find in the trusteeship theory any solution of the present problems. He was of opinion that the propertied classes took refuge in the metaphysical assertion that the poor were poor because of their actions in their past lives. His outlook on life and society was not metaphysical that extolled poverty and ignorance.

Ambedkar regarded the chaturvarnya system as the antithesis of socialism, for the sanction behind this system still divided the people, whereas the creed of socialism needed unity among them. To him, this system as an economic organisation was a

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20. Ibid., p. 34.
21. Keer, op. cit., p. 372

harmful institution, in as much as it involved the subordination of man's natural powers and inclinations to the exigencies (or rigidities) of social rules. This system imposed work on man, though he was reluctant.

According to him, caste-consciousness hampered all economic growth. It created conditions which were harmful for collective efforts in agriculture and other activities.[22] He remarked that caste and economic development were incompatible. To him, rural development, in the presence of caste relations, would be against the principles of socialism. Therefore, he stressed that the great feudal estates based on casteism must be broken up and the land be distributed to the people who tilled it and who could collectively produce things for the rapid progress of both cities and villages. According to him, the problem of socialism in India was more social than economic. The true test was not how far it helped men to solve their present problems, but how far it broke down the traditional barriers that separated man from man. To him, the present social system—economically, socially, politically and morally—was not suited to create a socialist spirit among the people. Socialism stood for social participation, whereas he thought that the present social structure was opposed to social intercourse and human equality. He said, "If the socialists wish to make socialism a definite reality, then they must recognise that the problem of social reform is fundamental and that for them there is no escape from it."[23] To him the prime necessity was to remove all social evils. According to him, if the social structure were not altered the present system was likely to collapse pretty soon and he added that the alternative, if democracy did not work in India, was something like communism.[24]

In a meeting which accorded reception in honour of Indo-Japanese Cultural Association, Ambedkar said that the present generation or future generation would have ultimately to choose between the gospel of Buddha and the teachings of Karl Marx. He added that the East had already become more important than the West; but he feared that if the Buddhist gospel was not adopted, the history of conflict in Europe would be repeated in Asia.[25]

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[22] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, pp. 19-21.

[23] Ibid., p. 19.

[24] Speech, 12 July 1953.

Buddha said, "There is dukkha (sorrow) in the world." He did not use the word exploitation, but he did lay the foundation of his religion on what he called dukkha. The word "dukkha" has been used by Buddha in the sense of property. Marx said that in order to prevent exploitation, the state must own the instruments of production. Buddha said that no monk should have private property. The rules as regards private property were seen in Buddha's teachings. According to Ambedkar, the Buddhist way to abolish sorrow was safe and it was the only alternative to Marxism.[26]

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25. Keer, op. cit., p. 423.
26. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, pp. 276-77.

Chapter Ten

POLITICAL PARTIES

SECTION 1—EVOLUTION OF IDEAS IN RELATION TO PARTIES

The depressed classes were organised under the Depressed Classes Mission, and the main task before it was the social uplift of the untouchables. To put forth social grievances, raise voice against unjust treatment by caste Hindus, obtain the educational facilities to ameliorate their economic conditions—were the main features of the programme before the depressed classes. They were not a political force in any form before the Montford Reforms of 1919. Representations on particular issues were made, but they were not of political demands but of social measures, calculated to further the progress of the community. Ambedkar and Srinivasan represented the depressed classes at the Round Table Conferences. In no political conferences were the depressed classes represented before.

According to the 1935 Act, the general election was to take place in 1937. Different parties began to prepare for the general election. The Indian National Congress was one of the biggest parties having following in every province. There were liberals, the Muslim League and other parties. But the untouchables had no political party of their own. At this critical time, Ambedkar took the lead and formed the Independent Labour Party (IPL) in August 1936.

The ILP fought the election in Bombay province; because the party functioned only in that province. Out of 15 seats assigned to the scheduled classes in Bombay presidency it captured 13 and in addition it won 2 general seats. Ambedkar fought his election in Bombay and was elected against the Congress candidate, P. Balu, the famous cricketer. He toured all the districts in the province and was determined to work the

1935 Constitution whereas the Congress accepted office to wreck this constitution.

After the formation of the ILP it was alleged that it drew its major following from Mahars, to which community Ambedkar belonged. Ambedkar stated that it was not his fault that the Mahars had a majority in the depressed classes.[1]

In this election the major question with regard to the untouchables was whether the Congress represented them or not. It was the attempt of Ambedkar (long since the Round Table Conferences) to prove that the Congress did not represent the untouchables. He remarked that the story that the Congress captured all the seats reserved for the scheduled classes, and that the ILP was a failure, was a wicked lie.

The ILP published its manifesto and outlined its programme, economic, social and educational.

Originally Ambedkar's idea was to organise a party exclusively of the depressed classes. He declared, "The present was no time of the parties communally organised, he had in agreement with the wishes of his friends, broadened the name and also the programme of the party, so as to permit political cooperation between the other classes and the depressed classes."[2] About the word "labour" he clarified : "The party was a labour organisation in the sense that its programme was mainly to advance the welfare of the labouring classes... The 'labour' is used instead of the words 'depressed classes' because labour includes the depressed classes as well."[3]

The party drew up a comprehensive programme which answered all the immediate needs or grievances of the landless poor tenants, agriculturists and workers. The ILP programme was comprehensive and radical in its ideology. The Congress programme was based on the Karachi Resolution (1931) on fundamental rights. Ambedkar assimilated those principles and formed his own programme.

The Congress formed ministries in eight provinces in 1937.

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[1] Keer, *Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, p. 322.

[2] Manifesto of the **II.P.**

[3] Ibid.

During its term in office, the ILP worked as an opposition party in Bombay presidency. It vehemently criticised the policies of the Congress (ruling party) regarding tenancy, antistrike bill, khoti bill and other measures. His speeches in the Bombay Assembly were well-studied, thought-provoking and penetrating. The ILP served as an eye-opener and a guide to the people.

The war of allies against the axis powers was in full swing. India was declared to be a belligerent country and hence her neutrality was nonexistent. The Congress demanded the declaration of the war aims of the allies. The government never declared them. In August 1940, the Viceroy of India put forth his offer to various political parties to extend the Viceroy's Council and to vigorously implement the war measures. In this "offer" the minimum political demands of the untouchables were not met.

A conference of the depressed classes was organised to congratulate Ambedkar on his membership of the Viceroy's Council. The speeches revealed a necessity of organising an all-India political party of depressed classes. And therefore the ILP was transformed into the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF) in July 1942. The conference chose N. Sivaraj as president. Ambedkar stressed that the scheduled castes had no economic and social power; therefore political power must be captured. He was ready to cooperate in the war effort; but the British could not concede the demands of the untouchables. He thought that if the government granted political rights to the Hindus, they would exploit the untouchables, therefore political power must be divided.

Religious, economic and political freedom; right to equality of opportunity; state responsibility to make every Indian free from want and fear; maintenance of liberty, equality and fraternity; redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, and of nation by nation; parliamentary system of government—these were the principles enunciated in the SCF Manifesto.

The collapse of the Liberal Party was a tragedy to the liberals; but, according to Ambedkar, it was really a disaster to the country.[4] For the rule of a single party was fatal to popular government. In fact it was a negation of popular government. He felt sorry that one-party system was existing in this country in the name of national solidarity.[5] According to him, the evil of it was that in it there were possibilities of tyranny and misdirection of public affairs. To have a popular government run by a single party was to let democracy become a mere form for despotism to play its part from behind it.[6] He equated the one-party system to despotism. To him, despotism, native or alien, was antithetical to freedom. "Despotism does not cease to be despotism because it is elective. Nor does despotism become agreeable because despots belong to our own kindred."[7] The real guarantee against despotism was to confront it with the possibility of its dethronement, of its being laid low, of its being superseded by a rival party. The secret of freedom, according to him, was courage, and courage was born in combination of individuals into a party.[8] A party was necessary to run the government. A democratic government could remain democratic only if it worked with two parties—a party in power and a party in opposition.[9]

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[4] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 73.

According to Ambedkar, the organisation of a party was spread over three concentric rings: (1) high command; (2) professional politicians, who constitute the party machine; and (3) persons tied to the party by tradition and emotional loyalty. They voted for the party ideal rather than for the party record. Those outside the second ring constituted the most vital field of action for a political party.[10] What was necessary for a party was to bring about concerted action—the crystallisation of individual opinions into public opinions. Theoretically, political parties were agencies for the expression and execution of public opinion; but in practice parties created, directed, influenced and often controlled public opinion. According to him, they must do two things: (1) establish contact with the masses, and (2) make propaganda among the masses. A party which failed to forge concerted action had no right to call itself a party.[11] He said that the Liberal Party had only the high command; it had no machine. It did not believe in mass contact. It was isolated and insulated from the main mass of the people. It did not believe in conversion. Like Hindu religion it was a nonproselytising creed. Propaganda and concerted action were anathema to the Liberal Party.[12]

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[5] Ibid., p. 74.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p. 75.
[8] Ibid., p. 76.
[9] Ibid., p. 77.
[10] Ibid., p. 78.

Ambedkar visualised the possibility of organising a party which would be a third balancing party. In a statement he said that the political power was the key to all social progress and the scheduled castes could achieve this power by organising themselves in a third party and holding the balance of power between the rival political parties—the Congress and the socialists.[13]

SECTION 2—FORMATION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY

The necessity of establishing an opposition party was felt by Ambedkar as early as December 1951. In the circumstances that existed prior to the general election of 1952, he felt that it would not be possible for the SCF to win the election. And for that, alliance with other left parties was inevitable.[14]

The question of cooperation with the Praja Socialist Party was discussed in the context whether its programme included "establishment of social equality and removal of untouchability". According to Ambedkar, "the socialists are not reliable".[15] Still he said that "I am inclined to Socialist Party. They are not communal and politically they are right."[16]

The Peasants' & Workers' Party (PWP) had accepted Marxism in its Dabhadi Thesis. Jayaprakash Narayan told Ambedkar that S. S. More, the leader of the PWP, was a procommunist and wished to merge his party into the Communist Party of

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[11] Ibid., p. 80.

[12] Ibid., p. 81.

[13] *The Times of India,* 25 April 1948.

[14] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad,* pp. 320-21.

[15] Ibid., p. 294.

[16] Ibid., p. 297.

India. Ambedkar said that if this was to happen then More was ruining the masses.[17] He advised Bhaurao Gaekwad not to give wholehearted support to the PWP. Still he asked his followers to give support to Jedhe, More and Raut (all PWP leaders in Maharashtra). This party had no special attraction for Ambedkar, because according to him, PWP was a communal party dominated by Marathas.[18] The PWP announced that the SCF was going to cooperate with the communists. Under these circumstances, the possibility of cooperating with PWP vanished forever.[19] He characterised the Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh as communal parties.[20]

On the eve of the first general election on adult franchise in free India, the Scheduled Castes Federation joined hands with the Praja Socialist Party, and made an electoral alliance with it (November 1951). Ambedkar appealed to support the candidates jointly put up by the socialists (PSP) and the Scheduled Castes Federation. He asked : Why should people think that I should remain an untouchable even in politics?

The Scheduled Castes Federation issued its Election Manifesto for the general election in 1952. In the first half of the manifesto, Ambedkar had stated some principles : Indians were entitled to equality; it would sustain the right of every Indian to freedom—religious, economic and political—it is state responsibility to make every Indian free from want and free from fear; insistence on the maintenance of liberty, equality and fraternity; redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, and of nation by nation; and for parliamentary system of government. The manifesto made it clear that the principles were meant for the downtrodden humanity in India.

As regards economic programme, the SCF stood for nationalisation of insurance—insurance to be made compulsory for state employees. It stood for abolition of prohibition. The manifesto asked, who has priority—the drunkard or the hungry?

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[17] Ibid., p. 280.
[18] Ibid., pp. 297-98.
[19] Ibid., p. 301.
[20] Ibid., p. 296.

As regards the cooperation with other parties, the SCF had outlined some principles : (1) It will not support independent candidates; (2) it will have no alliance with any reactionary party such as Hindu Mahasabha or the RSS; (3) it will have working alliance with backward class organisations; (4) it will have no alliance with the Communist Party of India; (5) it will have no belief in totalitarian parties; (6) it will oppose the growth of multiplicity of political parties, the ideal being two parties; (7) the Federation will be prepared to unite with Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party and socialists.[21]

Ambedkar was defeated in the election to parliament in January 1952. His failure was due to his advocacy of the partition of Kashmir, his speech before the Bombay Muslims on separate electorates for the Muslims, lack of positive speeches before the people and above all the weakness of his disorganised party. He had no alternative programme, but he only laid stress on the defects of the Congress government.[22] In May 1954, he was also defeated in the byelection. He realised that the party which had no support in rural areas had no future.[23]

The AISCF Working Committee in its resolution in October 1955 favoured the abolition of reservation of seats for the scheduled castes in central and state legislatures and district and local boards throughout the country "even before the general elections". In the first speech on 15 October 1956 after his conversion to Buddhism Ambedkar put forth this idea. The reserved seats were of no value and the unity of the nation was essential, he added. In an interview on 13 October 1956 he outlined the principles of the new party. He urged for a common front by establishing a new party. He drafted the constitution of a new party. According to him, the new party must be consolidated on the well-known principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

In November 1956, a meeting was convened at the residence of Ambedkar in New Delhi. In that meeting an electoral alliance of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (a united front of parties in Maharashtra struggling to create a united Maharashtra on lin-

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21. Manifesto of the SCF.
22. Keer, op. cit., p. 437.
23. Ibid., p. 450.

guistic basis before 1960) with SCF was signed. It contained four provisions : (1) to set up SCF candidates for general seats; (2) all reserved seats to be given to the SCF; (3) united attempts to remove injustice done to untouchables in villages; and (4) united attempts to solve other problems of untouchables.[24]

There was a move that the Marathi-speaking legislators should resign their posts in protest of the anti-Maharashtra attitude of the States Reorganisation Commission. Ambedkar criticised the resignations as "foolish" and "ineffective". He hinted in this connection the possibility of an opposition party being formed, called the Republican Party of India, which he said was the "summum bonum for saving democracy from passing into the hands of a dictator". He quoted Bryce as having said, "Dictatorship of a majority can be a dictatorship subservient to a single dictator", and remarked, "Unless we retrieve the situation by the formation of an opposition party there will be no democracy in the real sense of the word."[25]

Ambedkar's journey from ILP to the Republican Party of India was very important in the history of the depressed classes of India. When the ILP was in full swing, it was clear that its main loyalty was social and its major following was in Maharashtra. The next step was the formation of AISCF. It was the leading party of India's untouchables. "The AISCF was a national party of untouchables, yet it suffered from political aloofness and communal feelings."[26] This party continued to show strength, but the inconsistent alliances made by it in different states showed that its vitality was ebbing and that it could not function for long as an independent force. Dr Norman D. Palmer remarked,

> "The leading party of India's untouchables is the SCF. Its leader until his death was Dr B. R. Ambedkar, the most famous of India's untouchables. Its main strength has been among the Mahar untouchables of Maharashtra... It has never been a truly national party. Its aim is to gain for

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[24] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 342.
[25] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 21 January 1956.
[26] Weiner, *Party Politics in India*, p. 226.

> India's untouchables a status equal to or at least approaching that of the caste Hindus, socially, economically and politically."[27]

Ambedkar knew that in the first formation period they were narrow-minded in outlook and their only interest was the well-being of their community. He realised that since achievement of national freedom there was a necessity for a change in outlook, and cooperation with others, keeping in view the interests of the community and consolidation of newly won freedom.

The rout of AISCF in the first general election of 1952 gave Ambedkar a new vision. He realised that the old methods and outlook were incommensurate with the growing democratic consciousness of the Indian masses. He enunciated new principles of cooperation with all; but his untimely death could not see the birth of the new Republican Party of India (RPI) as visualised by him. The guiding principles were : (1) All Indians are entitled to equality, the party will foster equality; (2) every Indian has a right to develop himself, the state is only as a means to that end; (3) every Indian has a right to religious, economic and political freedom; (4) right of every Indian to equality of opportunity is upheld; (5) the state must be kept ever aware of its obligation to make every Indian free from want and free from fear; (6) the party will strive for redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, and of nation by nation. The party stood "for the parliamentary system of government as being the best form of government both in the interest of the public and in the interest of the individual". It is not tied "to any particular dogma or ideology, such as communism or socialism, Gandhism or any other ism".[28] The party avoided fascism or totalitarianism—which was a denial of the principles of liberalism and democracy. The party stood for national integration by solving the problem of linguism, casteism and communalism, because casteism was the denial of social justice. It wanted clean internal administration and a clear-cut foreign policy and an effective defence of northern borders of the country. It envisaged a new way for a

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27. Palmer, N. D., *The Indian Political System*, p. 210.
28. Election Manifesto of the RPI.

new orientation of democracy, liberalism, rationalism, humanism, socialism, empiricism, love and friendship.

The RPI was formed on the lines laid down by Ambedkar. He realised that India at present lacked both opposition and alternative government. He visualised "the danger of one-party government in India".

Chapter Eleven

LINGUISTIC STATES

According to Ambedkar, one language, one way of life and one religion are the pillars of nationalism. He regarded unification of Indians more vital and essential than unification of different provinces on linguistic basis. To him, a linguistic province meant a province which by the social composition of its population would be homogeneous and therefore more suited for the realisation of those social ends which a democratic government must fulfil. In his view, a linguistic province had nothing to do with the language of the province. He remarked: "The constitution should provide that the official language of every province shall be the same as the official language of the central government. It is only on that footing that I am prepared to accept the demand for the linguistic provinces..."[1]

The advocates of linguistic provinces had no intention of converting the provinces into separate nationalities. Ambedkar warned against things taking an evil shape in course of time. In a different context he said, "There must be different constituents in a federal state, but those constituents should not be on linguistic principles. They must be created according to the administrative conveniences."[2] According to him, the danger in creating linguistic provinces was that the language of each province would be its official language. He feared that the latter would lead to the creation of provincial nationalities. For, the use of the provincial languages as official languages would lead provincial cultures to be isolated, crystallised, hardened and solidified. He remarked, "To allow this is to allow the provinces to become independent nations."[3]

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1. Ambedkar's Statement before the LPC, p. 6.
2. *Navakal*, Diwali Number, 1963.
3. Ambedkar's Statement, op. cit., p. 7.

The creation of linguistic provinces would be fatal to the maintenance of the necessary administrative relations between the centre and provinces. It might lead to the break-up of India,[4] and central legislature would be a league of nations. Mentality of political insubordination might develop. This mentality would make the working of the government impossible. Apart from the disadvantages, he however claimed some advantages of linguistic provinces. He remarked, "Linguistic provinces would work democracy better than it would work in mixed provinces. They produce social homogeneity. There remain no artificial barriers or social antipathies which lead to the misuse of political power."[5] He remarked that by speaking in one common language "you have to unite India. For that you must learn Hindi." He stressed the importance of Devanagari script and said, "if the languages be printed in Devanagari script then we will love other languages".[6] There were different languages for different states in the USA. This experiment of "one language" was made, and they taught English to all. In one generation all learned English.

He regarded the different state languages as of no use and said that they must be drowned in sea; and Hindi should be one language, because it would strengthen national feelings. He felt the necessity of emotional harmony or national integration through one common language—Hindi. When asked, "What about the Marathi language of Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram (poet-saints of Maharashtra)?", he emphatically said, "that Marathi language must be nowhere. What is the use of those precious books in the present world? Those who want to read them should read. But why come in the way of national integration?" To the criticism that if Hindi is imposed the Dravidians would raise the banner of revolt, he replied, "Let them do. We must do some things which are essential to our nation."[7] Though he advocated Hindi as the national language, still he admitted the importance of English language and remarked that sense of nationalism was awakened in India through the common English

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4. Ibid., p. 2.
5. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
6. *Navayug*, Special Number.
7. *Navayug*, Diwali Number, 1963.

language. According to him, Gandhiji and the Congress popularised the idea of linguistic provinces. But "no thought was given to the possibility that it might introduce a disruptive force in the already loose structure of the Indian social life".[8] He held that linguistic difference was another name for cultural difference, and it was an appeal to local patriotism.

Ambedkar published a brochure named *Thoughts on Linguistic States* in which he summarised his evidence before the States Reorganisation Commission. He dealt with the problem of linguistic states also anew. According to him, "one state, one language" theory may be put up by any of two ways: (1) one state, one language and (2) one language, many states. He favoured the second. He was for eliminating the disparity between different states. K. M. Panikkar, a member of the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC), wrote a dissenting note to the report. In it he emphasised: "Units of federation must be evenly balanced." Ambedkar supported this contention by saying that "the disparity in the population and power between the states is sure to plague the country".[9]

After the publication of the States Reorganisation Commission's Report, Ambedkar expressed himself strongly against the creation of such "monolithic monstrous" states as United Provinces, Bihar and Maharashtra as he felt these states would be a great danger to the central government as well as to the minorities. The SCF claimed Bombay city for Maharashtra, but he thought he would not mind it being made a separate state. "There will be no protection to scheduled castes under the aegis of a state in which the overwhelming majority is opposed to recognition of scheduled castes as human beings. The scheduled castes are now without any safeguards."[10]

Ambedkar stated that by making Hindi the national language, the consolidation of the North and disintegration of the South would take place. In this connection he quoted Rajaji :

> "You are committing a great mistake. One federation for the whole of India with equal representation for all areas

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[8] Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 8.

[9] Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 13.

[10] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 21 November 1955.

> will not work. In such a federation, the Prime Minister and the President of India will always be from the Hindi-speaking areas. You should have two federations—one federation of the North and one federation of the South and a confederation of the North and the South with three subjects for the confederation to legislate upon and equal representation for both the federations."[11]

In order that the North should not be strong, Ambedkar suggested the break-up of different states as follows: (1) United Provinces (Hindi) into three states: (a) Meerut, (b) Kanpur, (c) Allahabad; (2) Bihar into two states: (a) Patna and (b) Ranchi; (3) Madhya Pradesh into two states: (a) Northern MP and (b) Southern MP. He stressed the importance of making united states of India, but remarked, "the consolidation of North and the balkanisation of South is not the way to reach it."[12]

Ambedkar favoured the formation of multilingual states. He outlined the following safeguards for a successful multilingual state : the vesting government with certain special powers to protect the minorities in that state; establishment of committees of members belonging to different linguistic states and the right of appeal to the governor. He said, "If ultimately we find we do not succeed even with these measures then fate may take us to the logical extreme end, namely to have a linguistic state."[13]

Potti Sriramalu of Andhra died as the result of fast undertaken for the separate Andhra province. Ambedkar thundered, "If in any other country a person had to die in order to invoke a principle which had already been accepted, what would have happened to the government? It is quite possible that the government might have been lynched. But here nothing has happened."[14] Government decided to form separate Andhra. Ambedkar prophesied that the creation of new province of Andhra was a portent of probably some other linguistic provinces coming into existence.

He opposed unification of Maharashtra. He remarked, "...you

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11. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistc States,* p. 15.
12. Ibid., p. 14.
13. Rajya Sabha Debates, 2 September 1953, pp. 864-79.
14. Ibid.

must abandon your habit of thinking on the basis of Maharashtrian pride. We must cultivate such ennobled and broad concepts, " 'I am an Indian', 'I am an Asian' or 'I am a cultured citizen of the world' instead of 'I am a Maharashtrian'." He warned against persuading a nationalist like him in the movement for the unification of Maharashtra.[15] According to him, the consolidation of Marathas (Marathi-speaking people) could serve no purpose. He asked, "Even from the point of view of Marathas why should there be this consolidation? What affiliation has a Maratha of Satara with the Maratha of Aurangabad?"[16] According to him, the Maharashtrians were more sincere, more conscious of their duties to the nation, and were ever willing to sacrifice for the cause of the nation.[17] Once he said, "Oh god, if at all I want to be born again, I will pray to be born again in Maharashtra."[18] But contrary statements can be seen in his speeches. He said in Rajya Sabha, "...I do not even like to call myself a Maharashtrian... I am fond of Hindi; but the only trouble is that the Hindi-speaking people are the greatest enemies of Hindi."[19]

Though Ambedkar was opposed to the unification of Maharashtra, still he insisted that all parts of Maharashtra should be merged in a single province. He remarked that Maharashtra would not merely be a viable province, but "a strong province in point of area, population and revenue".[20] According to him, the inclusion of Bombay in Maharashtra would not affect the right of non-Maharashtrians to use the port as before. He remarked that the trade and industry of Bombay was built by Europeans and not by Gujaratis. He said, "The Gujaratis were brought to Bombay by the officers of the East India Company to serve as commercial go-between. They did not come as traders."[21]

As regards the finances, he observed Maharashtra had claim on Bombay finances; because largest labour supply of Bombay comes

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15. *Navayug*, Special Number.
16. Rajya Sabha Debates, 2 September 1953.
17. Keer, op. cit., p. 416.
18. Deshmukh, *Gopal Govind*, p. 120.
19. Rajya Sabha Debates, 2 September 1953.
20. Ambedkar's Statement before LPC, p. 13.
21. Ibid., p. 20.

from Maharashtra. The surplus of Bombay was not consumed by Maharashtra but was consumed by the whole of India. The income and super taxes were on large measure collected from Bombay. He remarked, "Even if Bombay is made separate, Maharashtra will get its share."[22] By inclusion of adjoining parts in Bombay and creating Greater Bombay would make Bombay viable. Another important thing was that water and electricity of Bombay were supplied by Maharashtra. "To sever Bombay from Maharashtra would be to make the economic life of Bombay precarious and to dissociate the masses of Maharashtra from its intelligentsia without whose lead the masses of Maharashtra will be nowhere."[23] He remarked, "You talk of socialism, and you exclude Bombay from Maharashtra so that the mills and industries should not be nationalised! Is this 'socialistic pattern'?" "Bombay belongs to Maharashtra. Marathi-speaking people have right over it. No authority (even Brahmadev) can separate it from Maharashtra." On the eve of general election (1952) in a Bombay meeting under the presidentship of Asoka Mehta, he declared that he was in favour of forming linguistic states and Bombay must be included in Maharashtra.[24]

Just as Ambedkar suggested the break-up of Hindi-speaking UP state and forming three different states, similarly he suggested to form four different states of Marathi-speaking people: (1) Maharashtra city state; (2) Western Maharashtra; (3) Central Maharashtra, and (4) Eastern Maharashtra. According to him, the revenue arose because of the property tax and electricity tax. The property tax cannot be taken away. The new Bombay city state had no right to appropriate to itself the whole revenue derived from electricity. He put it in a concrete form. He said, "Let the centre take over the taxation of electricity and divide the yield among the four states of Maharashtra."[25]

The economic, industrial and educational inequality between the three parts of Maharashtra was an accepted fact. Ambedkar warned: "If the Central Maharashtra goes under University of Poona its destiny is doomed." He asked as to why Marathwada, which was not advanced, should be tied to University of Poona? "I should shudder to think what would happen when Marathwada goes under the Poona University." He warned that with the demand for United Maharashtra a demand for a single university might come up. "It is quite possible that with the madness for United Maharashtra, there will develop a madness for a single and common university." The real danger envisaged by him was that "United Maharashtra will be followed by the onrush of Poona and Nagpur Brahmins in Marathwada to pick up the jobs."[26]

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[22] Ibid., p. 31.
[23] Ibid., p. 40.
[24] *The Times of India*, 7 December 1951.
[25] Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 25.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that from the viewpoint of southerners and defence India needed a second capital. Delhi was a vulnerable place. It was within bombing distance of the neighbouring countries. From that point of view, he thought that Hyderabad, Secunderabad or Bolarum might be chosen as the second capital of India. This would facilitate to ease the tension between the North and South.[27]

A proposal was put forth by top-ranking Congress leaders that Bombay should be the commercial capital of India. Ambedkar strongly resented this proposal. He asked the Maharashtrians to completely reject this idea. According to him, there were two alternatives: making Bombay a part of Maharashtra, or making Bombay a separate city state.[28]

The struggle for United Maharashtra was carried out through one nonparty body. Eminent persons like D. R. Gadgil, D. V. Potdar, S. A. Dange, Shankar Rao Deo, M. R. Jayakar comprising all shades of opinion participated in the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad. But a scholar and a leader of Ambedkar's stature was conspicuously absent from all these deliberations. The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad submitted its evidence before the SRC through its delegates. Ambedkar submitted his own evidence before the commission.

The reaction to the SRC Report in Maharashtra was very bitter. In spite of opposition the bilingual Bombay state was formed. The protagonists of United Maharashtra established

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[26] Ibid., p. 27.
[27] Ibid., p. 35.
[28] *The Times of India*, 31 December 1955.

Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and carried on peaceful, legitimate activities and satyagraha agitation against the bilingual Bombay state. The Samiti was mainly formed by the left parties in Maharashtra. The Scheduled Castes Federation led by Ambedkar was a constituent party in all these episodes. In this connection Ambedkar said, "To end the bilingual Bombay state is my prime duty. We cannot change the cultural boundaries."[29] On the issue of tendering resignations of legislators who opposed the bilingual Bombay state Ambedkar clarified his position. He said, "The bilingual Bombay state must be ended. The Bombay city is the part of Maharashtra. I agree with Maharashtrians only on the point of Bombay. I am opposed to United Maharashtra. To resign from the legislature is a 'play' only. Instead of resigning from the legislature, the whole administration of local bodies must be ended."[30] In the preface of his book *Thoughts on Linguistic States* he warned against the formation of linguistic states. Yet he thought that essential questions could not be decided by any sort of hooliganism. He opposed solving them in a manner that would serve party interest.[31]

According to Ambedkar, linguism in our country was only another name for communalism. He remarked that in linguistic provinces the administration was handed over to the majority community. He stated two remedies to check this communalism: to give the power to the governor to override; or to appoint small committees which can make representations either to the ministry or to the governor.[32]

Karnatak demanded separation from the Bombay province (in 1938). Speaking on the resolution in Bombay Legislative Assembly Ambedkar expressed his fears that if Karnatak was created a separate province it would be a province predominantly of Lingayats working against other communities. He strongly opposed the resolution. In his separate report to the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon) he had opposed the separation of Karnatak on the same ground.[33]

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[29] *Prabuddha Bharat*, Special Number, October 1956.

[30] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 34.

[31] *Prabuddha Bharat*, Special Number, October 1956.

[32] Rajya Sabha Debates, 2 September 1953.

[33] Keer, op. cit., p. 306.

When the Mahar Watan Bill was moved in the Bombay Legislative Council, Ambedkar took utmost care that the Marathas should not oppose the bill. Raosaheb Mukundrao Patil was the president of the 14th Satyashodhak Conference held in Damodar Hall, Parel, Bombay, in June 1929. It was found that the Marathas opposed the Mahar Watan Bill. Mukundrao Patil also voted against the bill. The cleavage between the Mahars and Marathas was widened.[34]

In Maharashtra, the Marathas formed the majority community. Ambedkar stated, "Those who are going to rule are not Marathas by speech, but Marathas by caste; notwithstanding the hopes of the Brahmins. Now it cannot be denied that Marathas are politically the most backward community."[35] He added further that history had shown that the minorities, especially the scheduled castes and tribes, would not get justice at the hands of the Marathas.[36] "There is no man of eminence among them (Marathas) such as Tilak, Gokhale or Ranade. The Maharashtrians today count for nothing."[37] He added, "If there are three Maharashtra states, three Marathas can be trained as chief ministers and thirty Marathas can receive training as ministers. We can do real service to ourselves by helping to educate our ministers."[38] Finally he told the Marathwada people, "the shrubs do not grow under a tree. The Marathwada people must not forget the moral of this story."[39]

In India the social structure is built up on the caste system. It is the special product of Hindu civilisation and culture. The castes also produced lasting effects on elections. Ambedkar observed :

> "(1) The voting is always communal. (2) The majority community carries the seat by sheer communal majority. (3) The minority community is forced to vote the candidate of the majority community. (4) Minority votes are insufficient. (5) A voter of the major community never con-

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34. Khairmoday, *Life of Ambedkar*, Vol. II, pp. 227-28.
35. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 28.
36. Sriniwas, *Castes in Modern India*, p. 25.
37. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 28.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.

> descend to vote the candidate of the minority community. (6) A voter of the minority community takes pride in giving votes to the candidate of major community."[40]

He thought that in linguistic provinces the evil consequences of the caste system were sure to be sharpened. He remarked that the Congress always put up candidates who belonged to castes which were in the majority in the constituencies. Minority communities might be tyrannised and oppressed. They were sure to be discriminated against and denied equality before law and equal opportunity in public life.[41]

Ambedkar described two sorts of majorities: One was political majority, and the other communal majority. To him, political majority is changeable in its class composition. A political majority grows. The policies of a political majority are ever free to all to make and unmake. In it admission is open. A communal majority is born. Its doors are closed to others.[42] As regards the tyranny of the communal majority, it was not an idle dream. It was an experience of many minorities.[43]

Lastly, Ambedkar treated the problem of safeguards against communal tyranny. He stated that larger the state the smaller the proportion of minority to the majority. The creation of smaller states was thus a safeguard to minorities. The other safeguard was the provision of representation in the legislature. According to him, separate electorates or reservation of seats must not be resorted to. It would be enough to have plural-member constituencies (of two or three) with cumulative voting in place of the system of single-member constituency embodied in the present constitution. This would allay the fears which the minorities entertained about linguistic states.[44]

Ambedkar's policy with regard to various linguistic states can be summarised as follows: (1) the idea of having a mixed state must be completely abandoned; (2) the states must be unilingual, principle—one state, one language; (3) abandon the formula one language, one state—a people speaking one language may be cut up into many states as is done in the other parts of the world; (4) four principles must be observed: (a) efficient administration, (b) needs of the different areas, (c) sentiments of the different areas, (d) proportion between the majority and minority must be taken into consideration; (5) the state must be small, as the area increases, the proportion of the majority to minority increases; (6) protection must be given to minorities to prevent the tyranny of the majority—to do this, the constitution must be amended and provision must be made for a system of plural-member constituencies (2 or 3) with cumulative voting.[45]

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[40] Ibid., p. 34.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., p. 35.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

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45. Ibid., p. 33.

Chapter Twelve

PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

SECTION 1—SECOND WORLD WAR

The second world war started on 3 September 1939 due to the invasion of Poland by nazi Germany. England supported Poland and declared India to be a belligerent country.

After the declaration of the war, Ambedkar issued a statement declaring that there was not much virtue on the side of Poland, especially in her treatment of the Jews. He said that the Polish issue was only an incident in the war and Germany's claim to impose her will upon those who disagreed with her was a menace to all nations. He disagreed with those who held that England's difficulty was India's opportunity and added that Indians should not go in for a new masters.[1] He declared that it was unfair to India that it should have no voice in her foreign policy in declaring war and in the making of peace. According to him, India should remain within the British commonwealth of nations and strive to achieve the status of equal partner therein. Appealing to government to take steps to prepare Indians for defending their country, he reminded the British government how they had agreed at the Round Table Conference that the defence of India was to be treated as the responsibility of India. Concluding his statement, he stated that the duty of Britain towards India was to reassure her of the status she would occupy in the British empire after the war was over, and that India could not willingly and heartily fight for principles if she was not assured that the benefits of those principles would be extended to her when the war was won. He appealed his countrymen to support the war in their own interests. He advocated introduction of compulsory military training for all persons within certain age-group. Recruitment to the standing army must be open to all communities, he stated. The Independent Labour Party supported the appeal made by the Viceroy of India to help Britain in the war. It was of the view that the support should be unconditional.[2]

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[1] Keer, *Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, p. 323.

Commenting on the second world war he remarked that it was not altogether a war for the division of world's territories but was also a revolution which demanded a fundamental change in terms of associated life, between man and man, nation and nation. He further remarked that it was a revolution which called for the reorientation of the values of associated life. Victory over nazism would put an end to the nazi order. Under it liberty was lost, equality denied and fraternity purged as a pernicious doctrine. It was actually an order of hatred, war and enmity. To him, the victory over such evil forces was freedom and equality to other people and a new order of society to all. In this sense, he supported a war which meant independence, liberty and equality, a good government and a just society for preserving new values of life. Nazism had greatly degraded and disparaged man. It was against this degradation that he stood for. He said, "War cannot be abolished by merely refusing to fight when attacked; to abolish war, you must win war and establish a just peace."[3]

The Congress resolution of 14 September 1939 said that a free democratic India would gladly associate herself with the free nations for mutual defence and asked the British government to declare their war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and particularly regarding India. As a consequence of British denial to declare war aims the Congress ministries in different provinces tendered their resignations. Ambedkar blamed the chief minister of Bombay for not having tabled the demands in the name of the country, and resigning (1939) in obedience to the Congress high command. He reiterated his statement on war policy and declared that the untouchables would never accept a political status that would make them political Shudras. He said that he would not tolerate it if to the social, economic and religious dominance which the Hindus exercised over them, was added the political dominance. He then described how the majority were denying liberty, equality and fraternity for the growth of the untouchables. He published some figures to show the low percentage of untouchables in services.[4]

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[2] Ambedkar's Statement, *The Times of India*, 14 September 1939.

[3] Keer, op. cit., p. 354.

On 3 October 1939, a joint protest by the liberals (represented by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad), the scheduled classes (represented by B. R. Ambedkar), the Hindu Mahasabha (V. D. Savarkar) and the Parsis (Cowasjee Jehangir) was received by the Viceroy. The Viceroy was warned "not to be misled into the position enunciated by Mr Gandhi or to regard Congress and Muslim League as representing the whole or even the bulk of India. To concede the Congress claim to be the only party in the land would, they stressed, be a death-blow to democracy."[5]

The Viceroy interviewed leaders of different parties. Ambedkar was interviewed on 9 October 1939. He complained that the working of the Poona Pact had been far from satisfactory and he intended to raise the question at the next revision of the Constitution. The Viceroy issued a statement in which he said that at the end of the war the Government of India Act would be revised with the consent of the minorities. In the meantime a Consultative Committee would be formed during the war on which all parties would be represented.

In July 1941 Ambedkar was appointed on the Defence Advisory Committee. The Sikhs and the depressed classes resented their noninclusion in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. Ambedkar sent a protest cablegram to Amery, the then Secretary of State for India. V. D. Savarkar upheld Ambedkar's demand and wired to the Viceroy to include Ambedkar in the Executive Council.

Ambedkar urged the Mahar youths to suspend their studies and qualify themselves for military commissions and preserve their high martial traditions. He asked the government to raise Mahar battalions and not to make distinction as martial and nonmartial races. He tried to take advantage arisen out of the

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4. Ibid.: p. 336.
5. Menon, V. P., *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 65.

second world war by taking keen interest in militarisation movement, especially of his community.

SECTION 2—THE FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA

According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, peace, nonalignment, elimination of racial discrimination, the liberation of subject people and the maintenance of freedom, adherence to Panchsheel (respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence) were the main principles of our foreign policy.[6] India's foreign policy, according to Ambedkar, was based on peace, coexistence between communism and free democracy and opposition to SEATO.[7] He said, "If you want parliamentary government, you must be friendly with the countries which are trying to defend this form of rule against attack."[8]

In the election speeches in April 1954 Ambedkar made a frontal attack on the Nehru government and the leadership of Nehru. He said that the foreign policy of India rendered India friendless. Nehru bungled the Kashmir issue and sheltered persons that were dishonest, and that India was encircled by a kind of United States of Islam on one side and on the other side by the communist bloc of Russia and China, whose aim was to bring it under communism. He considered the American aid to Pakistan as a grave matter which would produce harmful results. With this aid to Pakistan, one could see other Muslim countries which were scattered and fragmented forging an alliance into United States of Islam encircling the whole of India. He asserted that Afghanistan had accepted American aid and the denial of a proposed Afghan-Pakistan Federation was merely a camouflage.[9]

The problem of Kashmir was a headache to India. Different solutions were put forth by different statesmen. Ambedkar advocated the partition of Kashmir on a communal basis.[10] Pakistan wanted Kashmir for strategic and economic reasons. Mohammed Sayeed, the secretary of the National Conference, commented on Ambedkar's suggestion. He said, "The scheduled caste leader's suggestion was inspired by America and Britain, from which two countries Dr Ambedkar hoped to get funds for election purposes. His plan meant the surrender of the whole of state to Pakistan. Praja Parishad should not commit a second mistake by supporting Dr Ambedkar's plan." J. N. Mandal, a scheduled class leader of Bengal, commenting on Ambedkar's plan, said, "Dr Ambedkar's suggestion for the division of Kashmir communitywise was brought with mischievous potentialities and was bound to repeat the scenes of horror and devastation which all experienced after partition." He further said, "I reject this summarily and believe that the vast majority of the scheduled class members shares my view."[11] Ambedkar commented, "We have never succeeded in solving the problem of Kashmir."[12]

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[6] Das, M. N., *The Political Philosophy of J. Nehru*, pp. 201-2.

[7] Rajya Sabha Debates, 20 August 1954, Vol. VII, p. 469.

[8] *The Times of India*, 22 April 1954.

[9] Ibid.

Ambedkar analysed the Chinese possession of Tibet. He accused the Prime Minister of helping the Chinese to bring their border down to the Indian border, because he allowed the Chinese to take possession of Lhasa. He commented that the foreign policy of India has not solved our problems. He remarked, "The key-note of our foreign policy is to solve the problems of the other countries, and not to solve the problems of our own."[13] According to Ambedkar, Panchsheel was an essential part of the Buddhist religion. He remarked that if Mao had any faith in the Panchsheel, he certainly would treat the Buddhists in his own country in a better way. He concurred with the following remark: "Panditji is aware that people's faith in Panchsheel and Bandung principles has been shaken. India's foreign policy needs an 'agonising reappraisal'."[14]

Churchill sided with the Portuguese when India claimed Goa.

[10] Ibid., 14 October 1951.

[11] Ibid., 16 October 1951.

[12] Ibid., 16 October 1951.

[13] Rajya Sabha Debates, 26 August 1954.

[14] Jain, G. L., *Panchsheel and After*, p. 1.

Ambedkar was indignant at this. He remarked : "I am sorry to see Mr Churchill in clandestine manner siding with the Portuguese saying to us, 'Do not use force.' "

Ambedkar was not a pacifist. He wanted to protect his country and make her prepared for war, if she was attacked. To him, the submission to wrong and surrender to evil was cowardice. It was against one's selfrespect and dignity. He did not oppose peace if peace was just and honourable. Free and peaceful living of nations was the principle underlying his concept of international relationship. It meant the creative effort of adjusting the worn machinery of democracy to the existing conditions of scientific society. According to him, the vital problem in international relations, particularly before the free nations of the world, was the expansion of communism. Referring to the principle of peace he said : "We want peace. Nobody wants war. The only question is : What is the price for this? At what price are we purchasing this peace?"[15]

On 15 October 1956, Ambedkar delivered a lecture at Nagpur. He criticised Nehru's foreign policy. Nasser had nationalised the Suez Canal. Nehru supported him and, in a way, he thought, demonstrated his uncertain policies. If Egypt obstructed the delivery of arms to India through the Suez Canal and adopted pro-Pakistan policies, then India's security would be in a jeopardy. He appealed for discontinuance of such a foreign policy inherent with disastrous consequences.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a public meeting at Chowpatty, Bombay, criticised the comments of Ambedkar regarding India's foreign policy. Referring to the criticism that because of the policy of nonalignment, India had no friends, Panditji declared that India had won political prestige in the world due to her foreign policy. He wondered as to how Ambedkar, a cabinet member, could not detect defects in the government or in the Congress policies and if he could visualise them, why he maintained silence? Was this the mark of consciousness or responsibility? Why Dr Ambedkar was deceiving the people? Every nation in one form or another is under the hegemony of any one of the power blocs. As a free nation, India was the only country—Nehru maintained—which had established herself in the UNO.[16]

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[15] *Thus Spoke Ambedkar*, p. 87.

From the above it seems that Ambedkar was pro-Anglo-Americans, anti-Soviet, pro-SEATO and against nonalignment policy of India. The coexistence between parliamentary democracy and communism was a myth to him.

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[16] **Ibid.**

Chapter Thirteen

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND JOURNALISM

SECTION 1—EDUCATION

Almost all leading nationalists, social reformers and theoreticians of modern India have contributed much to enrich the treasure of education. To name a few : Tilak, Gokhale, Lajpat Rai, Aushutosh Mukherjee, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Ambedkar's name can be included in this illustrious list.

The Wardha scheme of education had its roots in Gandhian ideology. As a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, Ambedkar attacked the Primary Education Amendment Act (1938). He contended that by adopting charkha (spinning wheel) the masses in villages would be deprived of education; their educational standard would be lowered. On the contrary the intellectual class in cities would be benefited by education and would secure advantage in services. Munshi, the then home minister of Bombay, said that Ambedkar was not the competent authority to judge the scheme and declared that most of the legislators who were not educationists would not be able to judge the scheme in its proper perspective.

Ambedkar started the Siddharth College, Bombay, on behalf of People's Education Society, Bombay, on 20 June 1946. He said that he could have named his college after a multimillionaire by taking millions of rupees from him, but he did not choose that path, instead he named the college after Buddha.[1] The ideals of the disciples of Gautam Buddha were emphasised by Ambedkar before starting Siddharth College. The ideas were : (1) to search after the truth, (2) to follow the teachings of religion which would teach humanity. Though he started People's Education Society, still he held that greater responsibility for providing educational opportunities should be that of government.[2]

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[1] *Navayug*, Special Number, April 1947.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that the present educational system could not produce good professors. He advocated the system of grouping different subjects. He was of the opinion that teaching and research must be the work of the professors; and they all must receive equal pay.[3]

From its inception the Bombay University was constituted as an affiliating body. Criticising this Ambedkar advocated the system of a synthesis in which the university and the colleges would be partners on terms of equality and would be participating in promoting together both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. He added that the recommendations of the Sadler Commission in this behalf would be far more effective than the recommendations of the Bombay University Committee.[4]

The Independent Labour Party in its manifesto on the eve of the General Election in 1937, following the 1935 Act, outlined its policy about educational problems. It advocated full and compulsory education, and laid special emphasis on technical education. It demanded scholarships through state aid to deserving persons from communities which were educationally backward. It intended to pass legislation to reorganise university education and establish teaching universities.[5]

Ambedkar did not think that boys and girls should be given the same education. He thought that they should be given the same education up to matriculation. Imparting education to girls on par with boys appeared to him the waste of time, money and energy. What, he asked, was the use of teaching Burke and Shakespeare to girls? Girls must be well-versed in home-education.[6]

Ambedkar was a part-time professor in Government Law College, Bombay; but on 1 June 1935 he was appointed as the principal of that college. He took keen interest in its activities

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2. Keer, op. cit., p. 125.
3. Ibid., p. 86.
4. Ibid.
5. *Navayug*, Special Number, April 1947.
6. Bombay University Ambedkar Collections (ILP Manifesto).

and development. He resigned the principalship in May 1938. His lectures were well prepared. He also enriched the library of the college because of his keen interest in it.

He outlined his concepts about an ideal professor. He said, "He should not only be learned; he must speak in a clear tone. He must be well-versed. My inherent qualities were developed (nurtured) by men like Prof Seligman and others. Prof Seligman said, 'You continue your work. Then you yourself will come to know how to follow research methods'."[7]

Ambedkar advised students not to take active part in politics during their school days. He impressed upon them the importance of selfculture and selfhelp. He exhorted them to work for an ideal in life and to accomplish it through their own industry and perseverence.

In his address to the Elphinstone College (Bombay) gathering in December 1952 Ambedkar urged the necessity of organising university education to meet the requirements of the modern world, and to make the university an abode of knowledge and not a centre of training clerks.[8] To him nothing was more sacred than learning. He recalled to students the glorious traditions, untiring industry, high aims and high sense of public life of Ranade, Tilak and Gokhale.[9]

SECTION 2—JOURNALISM

Every leader of repute had started newspapers. It was a part of his career and undertaking. It was a weapon to propagate the ideas and launch struggles against social and political tyranny. Lokamanya Tilak started the *Kesari*. Mahatma Gandhi started *Young India* and later *Harijan*; Lajpat Rai started *The People*, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru organised *The National Herald* at Lucknow. Ambedkar was not an exception.

To make the woes of the depressed classes vocal Ambedkar wrote articles in the weekly *Mukanayak* (The Leader of the

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[7] *Navayug*, Special Number, April 1947.

[8] Keer, op. cit., p. 441.

[9] Ibid., p. 461.

Dumb) in 1920. He wrote, "Many newspapers advance the interests of particular castes. They neglect the interests of other castes."[10] In *Bahishkrit Bharat* (The Boycotted India) and *Samata* (Equality) he wrote articles on current topics.

Janata (The People) was started after the Nagpur conference of the depressed classes in 1930. It was discontinued for some time, but he tried to restart it in 1943. The motto of this paper was : "Tell a slave that he is a slave, and he will revolt." He wrote that by giving political power in the hands of capitalists and Brahmins the prestige of those classes would be enhanced; on the contrary political power in the hands of the untouchables and the backward peoples would bring glory to the nation and help its material advancement. Such was the policy of *Janata*, which was run under the leadership of Ambedkar.[11] The paper was renamed later as *Prabuddha Bharat* (Awakened India). In these papers he raised the slogans, "Struggle, more struggle...The depressed people have a bright future only through the path of sacrifice...Our goal is to become the ruling race...Be like tigers." He said that only those who helped to advance their cause of social uplift alone had the right to criticise them. He was an editor of *Bahishkrit Bharat* from 1919 to 1942. He once criticised the Kesari (of Poona), because it refused to print the advertisement of the paper of the depressed classes even though the advertisement charges were paid in advance !

As an editor he studied the socio-religious problems. He expressed his thoughts in dignified and simple language. It revealed his earnest desire for social revolution. He attacked his adversaries bitterly and in a logical style.

According to Ambedkar, journalism in India was once a profession, it had now become a trade. It did not regard itself as the responsible adviser of the public. He remarked, "To give the news uncoloured by any motive, to present a certain view of public policy which it believes to be for the good of the community, to correct and chastise without fear—all those no matter how high, who have chosen a wrong or a barren path—is not regarded by journalism in India as its first and foremost duty." To accept a hero and worship him has become its principal duty. He said, "under it news gives place to sensation, reasoned opinion to unreasoning passion, appeal to the minds of responsible people to appeal to the emotions of the irresponsible". "Lord Salisbury spoke of the Northcliffe journalism as written by office-boys for office-boys. Indian journalism is all that plus something more. It is written by drumboys to glorify their heroes. Never has the hero-worship become so blind as we see it in India today."[12] He further commented that by their domination they had demoralised their followers and demoralised politics, and made half their followers fools and the other half hypocrites.[13]

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[10] *Mukanayak*, 31 January 1920.

[11] *Navayug*, Special Number, April 1947.

In establishing supremacy Indian journalism has taken the aid of big business and money magnates. He stressed the organised power of the money. He remarked that Indian politics has been grossly commercialised so much so that it has become a byword for corruption. He continued, "Politics has become a kind of sewage system intolerably unsavoury and insanitary. To become a politician is like going to work in the drain."[14] He warned that with the press in hand, it was easy to manufacture great men. Carlyle described the great men in history as so many bank notes. He remarked : "Like saying 'beware of pickpockets' we need to have notice-boards saying 'beware of Great Men'."[15]

Monopoly capital is playing big vicious role in Indian journalism. There are chain papers and a competition with them becomes very difficult. The glorification of private enterprise and denunciation of the struggles of the exploited classes have been their watchwords. In this context Ambedkar's remarks are relevant and noteworthy.

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[12] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, pp. 48-49.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 50.
[15] Ibid., p. 57.

Chapter Fourteen

ECONOMIC THOUGHT

Ambedkar was a keen student of economics. He got his M.Sc. degree for his thesis on "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India" and he was awarded D.Sc. for his thesis on "The Problem of the Rupee". His evidence before the Hilton-Young Commission was his important contribution to the discussion of currency problems in India. On different occasions he has dealt with the problems of landless labourers, small holdings, khoti system, Mahar watan, collective farming, land revenue and abolition of landlordism. As a large part of the untouchable community consisted of landless labourers, it was quite natural that he emphatically stressed the above problems. He has expressed his thoughts on nationalisation of industries, food position, socialism and social equality. In his budget speeches, he has discussed taxation problems.

The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India and *The Problem of the Rupee* were the only two notable books on economics written by Ambedkar. But besides the contribution to individual topics, a relatively integrated economic philosophy for Indian development and programme of action based on it is revealed in the manifestos of the Independent Labour Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation and in his speeches on the Constitution of India, in the shaping of which he played a most prominent role.

SECTION 1—LAND REFORMS

Ambedkar had written a small paper on "Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies" in the *Journal of Indian Economic*

Society. According to him, consolidation may obviate the evils of scattered holdings, but not the evils of small holdings unless the consolidated holding was an economic holding. The usual definition of an economic holding—"a holding which allows a man a chance of producing sufficient to keep himself and his family in reasonable comfort after paying his necessary expenses" —was criticised by him. He pointed out that this definition of economic holding was from the standpoint of consumption rather than of production. He remarked,

> "Any definition, therefore, that leans on consumption mistakes the nature of an economic holding which is essentially an enterprise in production. What is important for the purpose of production is the process of combining the factors of production."[1]

The crux of the matter was that the absolute size of land (which was small) was not the only decisive factor responsible for efficient production.

> "The existing holdings are uneconomic, not, however, in the sense that they are too small but that they are too large... Consequently, the remedy for the ills of agriculture in India does not lie primarily in the matter of enlarging holdings, but in the matter of increasing capital and capital goods."[2]

According to Ambedkar, capital arises from saving and that saving is possible where there is surplus. Capital is, thus, but crystallised surplus. But the main thing was that no surplus was possible in agriculture. The reasons were obvious. A large agricultural population with the lowest proportion of land in actual cultivation meant that a large part of the agricultural population remained idle instead of performing any sort of productive labour. The depression of our national dividend was another important effect of this idle labour. The agricultural population exerted tremendous pressure on land resulting in the increasing ruralisation of the country. The universal prevalence of the small farms was due to this enormous pressure on

[1] Ambedkar, *Small Holdings in India,* p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

land. He remarked: "It is the failure to grasp the working of this pressure on land that makes the law of inheritance such a great grievance."[3]

According to him, the evil of small holdings in India was not fundamental, but was derived from the parent evil of the maladjustment in her social economy.[4] The remedy for preventing subdivision and fragmentation was consolidation of holdings; but under the existing social economy it was not possible, he said, "instead it will serve to be a legal eye-wash".[5]

After the adoption of the one-man rule of succession a survey number would be made to cover a piece of land which would be of the size fixed for an ideal economic holding. A piece of land with a separate and distinct survey number must not be below the economic unit. Such was the idea of an economic unit propounded by Ambedkar. According to him, consolidation and its conservation were so intimately connected that the one could not be thought of without the other.

Ambedkar has given in that paper extracts from *London Times* describing how agriculture improves by the reflex effects of industrialisation. He summed up: "Industrialisation facilitates consolidation. It lessens the premium on land. It must precede consolidation. It is a barrier against future subdivision and consolidation."[6]

The khoti system was one of the minor land tenures in the former Bombay presidency. It was found mostly in Ratnagiri district and in some parts of Kolaba and Thana districts. The exploitation and the pauperisation of the peasantry was a burning problem in those parts. In the ryotwari (peasant proprietorship) tenure, the government collects revenue directly from those who are in occupation of the land, while in the khoti tenure the government is required to employ the services of the khot for the purpose of collecting revenue.

Ambedkar first raised his voice against this system. In the Depressed Classes Conference (April 1929) in Ratnagiri, he gave a call to strive the utmost for the abolition of the khoti system.

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[3] Ibid., p. 21.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

[5] Ibid., p. 24.

[6] Ibid., p. 28.

He introduced a bill in the Bombay Legislative Council on 7 September 1937, which aimed at abolishing the khoti system. By this bill he aimed at securing occupancy rights to the tenants, and substituting it by ryotwari system. He explained the aims of the bill as follows:

> "(1) to abolish the khoti system and to establish direct relationship between government and those who are in possession or occupation of the land which is under the management or beneficial enjoyment of the khot; (2) to make provision for the payment of reasonable compensation to the khot for the loss of his rights; (3) to give those inferior holders who are in actual occupation of the land the status of occupants within the meaning of the land revenue code. The khoti system does not come under the land revenue code; it is a separate item altogether."[7]

According to the Hereditary Offices Act, the Mahars, the holders of the posts, were required to work all day and night, and in the absence of a Mahar servant, his father or any other member of his family was impressed into the government service. For this hard work they got each a piece of land as watan, some corn from the villagers and a pittance varying from two annas to a rupee and a half per mensem. The result of the watan was that the Mahars lost selfrespect; their ambition and ability were tied down to these trifling menial jobs. Ambedkar saw that the practice deteriorated the Mahar community and he resolved to liberate it. He introduced a bill in the Bombay Legislative Council to amend the Bombay Hereditary Offices Act, 1874, on 19 March 1928. In several meetings and conferences, he made clear the objects of this bill. The first purpose was to permit commutation of the watan at the option of the holder; the second, to provide better security for the payment of remuneration of certain classes of watandars; and the third purpose was to provide for specification by rules of the duties to be performed by watandars. While moving the bill in the Bombay Legislative Council on 3 August 1928, he made a vigorous speech. He brought to the notice of the house that the lands were given to the Mahars by the ancient emperors of the

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7. Ibid., p. 28.

country, and the present government had neither increased the extent of the land nor paid any attention to the remuneration of these people, and the income they would get was not even worth consideration. He proposed that the watan lands should be given to the holders of those posts at the full rate of assessment and they should be relieved from the obligation to serve. They should be paid from the revenue derived from the assessment levied on the lands of the Mahars and from the baluta (collection of grain made by watandar Mahars from the villagers). He said :

> "I can assure the house that the Mahar people are absolutely determined to have the bill, and... if the government refuses to liberate on grounds of inconvenience, or any other grounds, then it will be a war between the revenue department and the Mahars. If this bill does not pass... I am going to spend the rest of my time in seeing that the Mahars organise a general strike."[8]

He concluded that the watans were the greatest hindrance in the advancement of the Mahar community.

The bill was referred to the select committee of twenty-three members, and the committee was to report by the beginning of June 1929. The select committee changed it beyond recognition. Ambedkar proposed to convert baluta into a money cess, but the committee opined that the watan lands should not be given over to the watandars on payment of the full assessment on their lands but should be given on half the proceeds of the lands. The representatives of the vested interests opposed the very essence of the bill. At last on 24 July 1929, Ambedkar withdrew the bill.

The Mahars were excluded from the land revenue because those lands were given to them as watan lands. But owing to the stringency of money, assessment on a small scale was recovered from the Mahars since the Peshwa rule. This revenue from the watandar Mahars was known as judi. This judi was not recovered in cash but in the form of corn. The Mahar leaders probably wanted to change judi into full assessment and desired to be paid monthly wages for services rendered to government

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8. Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. XXIII, p. 721.

and villagers. The first Congress ministry (1937-39) in Bombay presidency came to the conclusion that a scheme of this kind must be opposed. At Haregaon (Ahmednagar district) a conference was organised on 16 December 1939, and a statement was submitted to the governor of Bombay. The struggle against judi system was started. The government of Bombay conferred with Ambedkar. To transform the watan lands of Mahars into the ryotwari lands, to pay monthly wages to the Mahars treating them as inferior servants and to make them do only government jobs were the demands of the Mahars put forth before the government.

Ambedkar again introduced a bill in the Poona session of the Bombay Legislative Council in 1937 (17 September) to abolish the Mahar watan for which he had been agitating since 1927. He was the "first legislator in India to introduce a bill for the abolition of the serfdom of agricultural tenants".[9] He wanted to solve the problem of Mahar watans by all legitimate and constitutional means. In a letter to Gaekwad, he clearly wrote that he did not want the agitation against this watan system to turn into a satyagraha. It was suggested on behalf of the government that in the war emergency, such a struggle by the Mahars was not desirable. When Ambedkar became member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he promised to withdraw the movement, for he thought that he might be able to serve the cause better as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council than to conduct such a struggle. It was promised on behalf of the government that no increase in judi would be effected. To agitate against the watan system he established the Bombay State Inferior Village Watandar Association on 16 June 1956, and he became its chairman. In a statement he made clear the objects of the association and if the government did not solve the problem amicably then he expressed his desire to prosecute the government. When the question of giving land to the watandars came up, the villagers opposed it by all means at their command. They thought the problem of their cattle more important than the problem of Mahar watandars. Ambedkar said that government accepted the principle "land to the tiller", but was not ready to include government lands under the jurisdiction of the act.[10] He believed that the Watan Act and the watan system were contrary to the provisions of the Constitution of India. He was of opinion that a writ petition should be filed in the high court in the matter, and if it was unsuccessful there, it must be taken to the Supreme Court.[11]

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[9] Keer, *Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, p. 286.

The Mahar watan was at last abolished under the Bombay Inferior Village Watans Abolition Act of 1959.

The land revenue assessment did not depend upon the agricultural income. There was a controversy whether land revenue was a rent or a tax. The question was : How was land revenue assessed?

It was emphasised that land revenue must be assessed on the agricultural income. Ambedkar in an article stressed the point that it was unjust to assess the land revenue on the income. The rate of assessment did not depend on the capacity to pay the tax. The taxable capacity was enhanced with the growth in the income. Under these circumstances, it was held that the present system of assessment was unjust. So it was not just to receive equal taxes from all. Those below a certain income must be exempted. In the case of land revenue, the rich and the poor were equally taxed. He remarked that article 107 of the land revenue code must be abolished, and land revenue must be brought under the income-tax provisions.[12]

Ambedkar impressed upon the poor peasants that their woes had their roots in the joys of the landlords. According to him, the urgent problem of landless labourers must be solved by taking over the uncultivated lands for cultivation and giving them to the landless labourers. In the case of landless labourers, land-hunger was dominant. The tenancy legislation aimed at the satisfaction of land-hunger could not solve the problem of landless labourers. The consolidation of holdings and the tenancy legislation were worse than useless. They could not bring about the prosperity in agriculture. He said : "They are

[10] Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, pp. 336-38.
[11] Ibid., p. 326.
[12] *Kesari*, 18 August 1925.

of no help to untouchables, who are landless labourers; only collective farms can help them."[13]

As a system of land tenure, landlordism was untenable. So Ambedkar urged its abolition. He said,

> "I too agree, that after abolishing landlordism, the state must be the owner of the land and not the proprietor or the peasant. The natural consequence of the abolition of landlordism must be collective farming or cooperative farming. But, we are too much individualists. The cooperative farming, though useful and improving in production, is regarded by the peasant as an aggression on our system. This is due to the individualist tendencies of our farmers. Though we abolished landlordism we would not be able to build our economy on sound basis by such methods. The whole outlook of our peasants must be changed, then and then only we would be able to reap the fruits of our revolutionary attempt to throw off the yoke of landlords."[14]

To improve the productivity of agriculture the ILP suggested the starting of land mortgage banks, agricultural producers' cooperative societies and marketing societies. The pressure of population on land was aggravated by the fragmentation of holdings, and it was a direct cause of poverty of the agriculturists. Protection of an agricultural tenant was urgent; and the benefits that an industrial worker gets must be advanced to the agricultural worker also. In respect of land problems, the schemes of land settlement to unemployed and landless must be adopted. Though industrialisation progressed, agriculture was bound to remain the foundation of India's economy. For increased agricultural production, mechanised agriculture, large farms, introduction of cooperative and collective farms must be devised. The principles of minimum wage must be introduced for agricultural labour.[15]

Ambedkar had prepared a memorandum on the safeguards for the scheduled castes for submitting to the Constituent Assembly of India on behalf of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation.

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13. Keer, op. cit., p. 375.
14. Karnik, *Kirloskar* magazine.
15. SCF Manifesto, 1952.

The brochure was published under the name *States and Minorities* in 1947. In it he regarded untouchables as really economically dependent on touchables. He regarded the contest between the Hindus who were economically and socially strong and the untouchables who were economically poor and numerically small as the war between the caste Hindus and the untouchables.[16] He proposed state ownership in agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form of state socialism in the field of industry. He wanted the state to supply capital necessary for agriculture as well as for industry. He said that state socialism was essential for the rapid industrialisation of India.[17]

Ambedkar was discussing some problems with S. A. Dange. "Where is sufficient land to give all?", Ambedkar asked. He said further, "I prefer Soviet system. The collectivisation of agriculture is the only way out of our evils. The Soviet system of agriculture is according to me the best."[18]

SECTION 2—CURRENCY PROBLEMS

Ambedkar's writings on currency problems constituted his book *The Problem of the Rupee* (published in 1923) and his evidence before the Hilton-Young Commission (in 1926).

Ambedkar attempted an exposition of the events leading to the establishment of the exchange standard and an examination of its theoretical basis. Other writers have popularised the notion that the exchange standard was the standard originally contemplated by the government of India; but he found that this was a gross error. He remarked:

> "This difference proceeds from the fundamental fact which seems to be quite overlooked by Professor Keynes, that nothing will stabilise the rupee unless we stabilise its general purchasing power. This the exchange standard does not do. That standard concerns itself only with symptoms and

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[16] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 50.

[17] Ibid., p. 37.

[18] *Navayug*, Special Number, April 1947.

does not go to the disease: indeed, on my showing, if anything, it aggravates the disease."[19]

Ambedkar opposed the exchange standard. According to him, "the far better way would be to have an inconvertible rupee with a fixed limit of issue". An essentially sound and radical measure would be to melt the rupees, sell them as bullion, use the proceeds for revenue purposes and fill the void by an inconvertible paper. But he did not press for it. The vital point was to close the mints for public and government too. He said, "Once that is done, I venture to say that the Indian currency, based on gold as legal tender with a rupee currency fixed in issue, will conform to the principles embodied in the English currency system." The report of the Fowler Committee was regarded by him as nonsense, and he insisted that "the principles of the Fowler Committee must be given up if we are to place the Indian currency on a stable basis".[20] The main point round which the whole argument was evolved was thus: "The fixity of value between the various components of the currency is an essential requisite in a well-regulated monetary system. When it ceases to do so, it becomes a mere commodity, the value of which fluctuates with the fluctuations of the market."[21]

The Chamberlain Commission was in favour of the exchange standard. It was favourably impressed by the increase of trade and the buoyancy of government finances. The chief ground on which it rested was that the currency system was capable of maintaining the exchange value of the rupee at a fixed par with gold.

Ambedkar put this question: "Did the rupee fail to maintain its gold parity?" He emphatically answered: "The only scientific explanation sufficient to account for the fall of the rupee would be to say that the rupee had lost its general purchasing power."[22] This explanation was not shared by the government of India. The official explanation was that a fall in the gold value of the rupee was due to an adverse balance of trade. Such was also the view of eminent supporters of the exchange standard like Keynes and Shirras.

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[19] Ambedkar, *The Problem of the Rupee*, Preface, p. vi.

[20] Ibid., p. vii.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 198.

Ambedkar complained that the Chamberlain Commission or the Smith Committee on Indian Currency never troubled about the prices in India. The prices in India not only rose as much as gold prices, but rose more than gold prices. This fact was admitted even by Keynes. He explained the discrepancy thus: "That the actual exchange rates correspond to the purchasing power parities of two currencies not with regard to all commodities but with regard to some only, that is, to such commodities as are internally traded."[23] He summed up his arguments thus:

> "It is the rupee currency which has been, ever since the mint closure, the chief source of danger to the welfare of the Indian people, particularly because of the principle of governing its issue. Because that principle has the support in itself a surprising thing of such eminent authorities as Professor Keynes, Mr Shirras and the Chamberlain Commission, it cannot alter the case for depriving the government of this power of managing the rupee currency for the principle is essentially unsound."[24]

Ambedkar blamed G. K. Gokhale and Professor V. G. Kale for rebuking the government on several occasions for not making the profits on rupee coinage available for the advancement of the moral and material progress of the country. In 1907, the profits on rupees were actually employed in the extension of railways. He pointed out the dangers of manipulating the currency and concluded:

> "If it is desirable to do away with the management then convertibility is an insufficient measure: for with convertibility the rupee will still remain a managed rupee. Only the complete stoppage of rupee coinage will remove the governmental interference in the management of Indian currency, and it is this that we must, therefore, ask for. Queer as it may seem, safety lies in an inconvertible rupee with a fixed limit of issue."[25]

The Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance (chairman: Hilton-Young) was appointed in 1925. As an eco-

[23] Ibid., p. 252.
[24] Ibid., p. 263.
[25] Ibid., p. 303.

nomist, Ambedkar was called upon to give evidence before the commission. According to Ambedkar, the choice was not between the gold standard and the gold exchange standard; the choice was between the gold standard and a compensating standard of Professor Fisher or a tabular standard of Professor Jevons. Gold standard meant not the starting of a gold mint but making provision whereby gold would become current. For currency it was the standard.

Of the convertibility and fixity of issue, Ambedkar preferred fixity of issue system. A convertible system was a managed system. A fixed issue system besides management would make provision for a larger use of gold in currency.

The prices rose because of the depreciation of gold; therefore, it must be appreciated. After 1910 the production of gold increased with the result that the continuance of the exchange standard thereafter not only did not help the countries to check the rise in prices but became a direct cause of the rise in the prices. During the war, the use of paper money led to a greater depreciation in the value of gold, all of which was practically due to the economy of gold in its use as currency.

The gold standard reserve was peculiar in one respect, viz the assets, i.e. the reserve, and the liabilities, i.e. the rupees, were dangerously correlated by reason of the fact that the reserve could not increase without an increase in the rupee currency. The reserve was built out of the profits of rupee coinage. Therefore Ambedkar was in favour of the abolition of the gold standard reserve as being of no practical use for maintaining the stability of the currency. He concluded : "It is much better to introduce a currency system which will do away with the exchange standard and also the gold standard reserve."[26] He proposed that the government should use part of the gold standard reserve for reducing the rupee currency by a substantial margin so that even in times of reserve depreciation it might remain limited to the needs of the occasion.[27] In European countries, the problem was one of deflating the currency, i.e. appreciating it; in other words bringing about a fall in prices.

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26. Royal Commission on Currency and Finance, Vol. II, Statement, p. 237.

27. Ibid.

In India, according to him, the problem became one of inflating the currency, i.e. depreciating it; in other words, bringing about a rise in prices. For a change from 1s 6d gold to 1s 4d gold meant this and nothing else.

It is generally believed that exchange and internal price level were interdependent; but Ambedkar remarked that exchange could not be said to be in complete harmony with the whole of the price level of a country. Exchange affected only such things as entered into international trade. Ambedkar thought more of prices rather than of exchange ratios. He admitted that "the exchange ratio between two currencies might remain the same and yet the internal price levels in the two countries may differ".[28] Replying to a question about the relation between internal currency and gold value, he said, "I do not quite accept that; it may be stable for international purposes; it might not be stable for internal purposes."[29]

Ambedkar was really more in favour of the use of gold. According to him, gold itself might be subject to inflation. The internal unit should be stable not in relation to gold, but in terms of commodities. This should be done by stopping the coinage of rupees altogether and prescribing the use of gold. He criticised the attitudes of Professor Jevons and Professor Fisher. Professor Fisher would, for instance, alter the metal in the gold unit according to a certain index number, and Professor Jevons would allow more units to be given or less units to be given according to a certain index number. But Ambedkar remarked: "I think those two are too complicated. I personally believe that gold standard for all practical purposes is sufficient. My submission is that India should have gold in currency. Gold should not only act as a unit of reference."[30]

Asked about the merits of gold standard, Ambedkar remarked that it placed certain definite limitations against possible fluctuations. He was in favour of a gold standard simply because compensating systems were not workable. Elaborating the point further he remarked that instead of using gold they used notes backed by gold. "I do not mean that we should use gold from

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28. Ibid., Minutes of Evidence, p. 314.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.

hand to hand."[31] Replying to another question about the trade cycle, he replied that the gold standard did not ameliorate the consequence of a trade cycle.[32]

The commission asked : "Do you suggest that exchange should be used as a lever for adjusting price levels?" Ambedkar replied: "No, I do not say that 1s 4d in 1914 is not the same as 1s 4d in 1926. Price level should be taken into consideration." To one question he replied that the problems in India were not different from the West. To another he replied that the stability of prices was the main problem, and remarked that the stability would best be secured by a gold standard with gold currency. Internal prices would then be linked to gold prices, and they would vary with the gold prices. He remarked : "If the gold exchange standard is made automatic, it cannot secure those objects." He further said that there might be some people who held that view, but that view was not justifiable. The gold exchange standard depreciated gold and made it therefore useless as a standard of value. The GES caused a redundancy of gold by its economy. Prices would be more stable in gold standard than the gold exchange standard. He said, "I do not suppose that the international conference at Genoa adopted the gold exchange standard with a view to stabilising the purchasing power of gold. They did it to stabilise their own currency."[33] According to him, convertibility is a means of limiting the volume of currency to the needs of a country. Convertibility to be more effective must be absolute.

In India conditions in 1926 pointed to a gold standard with its usual concomitant of a gold currency. Under those conditions, in India, a gold currency could not be regarded as an unnecessary luxury or merely a matter of traditional etiquette associated with the gold standard. This was why almost all Indian witnesses and some European witnesses of unquestioned competence, like Dr Cannan and Dr Gregory, strongly urged on the Hilton-Young Commission the need for the adoption of a gold currency standard.

According to Ambedkar, in linking the rupee to gold at 2s it

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31. Ibid., No. 6117.
32. Ibid., No. 6114.
33. Ibid., No. 6238.

overlooked the real character of the rise which had taken place and underestimated the deflation which would have become necessary to maintain that rate. The 2s gold rate meant a considerable overvaluation of the rupee in comparison with its purchasing power parity with gold at the time and the attempt to give a fixed gold value to the rupee was premature, as the value of gold itself was undergoing the most violent variations and the conditions of international trade were still extremely unstable. To him, lower rate would discourage import of gold. At a lower exchange rate, India would be able to face better world competition of depreciated and devalued currencies. While a lower rate would make all remittances to England more costly, a high rate would benefit the central and provincial governments and would cheapen all foreign remittances. A higher exchange rate would benefit industries that required machinery and plants, and the consumer was benefited because rupee prices of all imports would be lower. A small section of the middle class would derive some benefit. A lower exchange rate would render imports of consumer goods, capital goods and raw materials more costly. A lower exchange rate would not affect the labouring and working classes. On the other hand, a fall in agricultural prices, as a consequence of higher rate, would render agriculture less remunerative, affecting those who were engaged in agriculture and through them the industrial and business sections of the community.

Ambedkar struck a golden mean. According to him, the best solution would be to strike an average between 1s 4d and 1s 6d and away from 1s 4d. The opponents of the higher ratio dwelt on the increase in the burden of rural indebtedness caused by it, but they did not take into account certain compensating advantages accruing to the agriculturist from cheaper implements and in general, a decreased cost of production.

SECTION 3—PROBLEMS OF FINANCE

Ambedkar's thesis, *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*, for his M.Sc. (Economics) degree, his speech on the discussions of article 277 in the Constituent Assembly, taxation policy envisaged in the manifesto of the ILP, and his speeches on the budget and the estate duty bill formed the bulk of his writings on the problems of finance.

Ambedkar traced the evolution of provincial finance since 1855 through three distinct stages, each with its own mode of supply, namely budget by assignments, budget by assigned revenues and budget by shared revenues. The division of the stages in the growth of provincial finance according to the method of supply to the provincial governments was adopted by the government of India. One notable thing is that the provincial finance was not independent in its organisation. The provincial finance and the decentralisation of finance were not synonymous. There was inadequacy in the term decentralisation.

The decentralisation of 1855 was the decentralisation of Indian finance resulting in the separation of local from imperial finance; the decentralisation of imperial finance resulting in the separation of provincial from imperial finance. And the decentralisation commencing from 1882 was the decentralisation of provincial finance resulting in the separation of local from provincial finance.[34]

Ambedkar opposed the "mechanical" plan of Justice M. G. Ranade by which it was contemplated that the revenues and charges incorporated into the provincial budgets were revised every fifth year. He commented on the pamphlet styled *Decentralisation of Provincial Finance* as "careless phraseology". Although it dealt with the development of provincial finance, it was likely to be passed over by the student, for its title implied that its subject-matter must be the growth of local finance. If Justice Ranade had been conscious of the varieties of decentralisation, he would have probably realised that the title of that pamphlet was false to its contents.[35]

Prior to the inauguration of the imperial system, the provincial governments had the obligation to raise money for the charges included in their budgets. The grants were never carefully prepared nor was the limit set on them observed in practice. In the next stage, federation was advocated not only in the interests of economy and plenty, but also in the interests of equity. The third stage in its nature was a compromise between constitutional imperialism and constitutional federalism. It meant imperial finance without imperial management. Under the compromise the revenues and charges remained imperial in status, but their management was to be provincialised, so that each of the provincial governments was given to administer a part of the imperial charges incurred in its territory within the limits of a part of the imperial revenues collected within its territory.[36]

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[34] Ambedkar, *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*, Introduction, p. xxi.

[35] Ibid.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation was published in 1909. Convinced of the virtue of grants-in-aid as a brake on decentralisation, degenerating into disintegration, the commission only recommended that this measure be taken to give provincial finance the greatest elasticity by diminishing the assignments to the smallest magnitude possible.[37] The only point of difference between quasipermanent and permanent settlements in that respect was a partial replacement of the fixed adjusting assignments by increased shares in joint heads of revenue and expenditure.[38]

The only theory of financial relationship between the two governments, which accorded with facts and agreed with law, was, according to Ambedkar, that of aggregation of the sources and distribution of the yield. In other words, provincial finance simply meant that the government of India opened a provincial services account in its treasury books which varied with the yield of the assigned or shared revenues and on which and to its extent only the provincial governments were permitted to draw.[39] It was, therefore, no exaggeration to say that provincial finance instead of being an independent system of finance involving freedom to tax and freedom to spend was only a matter of accounts, the operations on the debit and credit side of which were subject to stringent control on the part of the government of India.[40] For the purposes of visualisation, the financial relationship between the provinces and the government of India might be likened to the Hindu joint family system. It remained a joint family system although separate accounts were opened by the head of the family, namely, the government of India, to guard against any member overdrawing the amount placed to his credit.[41] Ambedkar criticised that the scope of provincial finance was unduly restricted by too narrow and too legalistic an interpretation of the constitutional obligations of the government of India.[42] He stated that the changes in the system of provincial finance introduced in consequence of the Reforms Act of 1919 were not caused by any inherent defects in the system as it stood at that date. They were effected because the system as a whole was inconsistent with the great revolution which that act had sought to effect in the governmental system of that country.[43]

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[36] Ibid., p. 46.
[37] Ibid., p. 131.
[38] Ibid., p. 132.
[39] Ibid., p. 165.

In the act of 1919, the provincial settlements were based not on provincial revenues, but on provincial needs, and therefore a central control was inevitable. Provincial subjects were fifty-two, hence the demarcation of the field for the governance of India into central and provincial. Such a demarcation of administrative and financial matters was the dream of many an Indian politician and statesman. This view was urged before the Royal Commission on Decentralisation by G. K. Gokhale in his political testament.[44] Ambedkar brought out the salient features of the 1919 act by way of criticism. He said that hybrid executives, divided responsibility, division of functions, reservation of powers could not make for a good system of government, and where there was no good system of government, there could be little hope for a sound system of finance. The primary solution was that there should be an undivided government with a collective responsibility.[45]

The weak point of the old situation had been that the administrative and financial responsibility did not rest on one and the same authority as should have been the case. To avoid

[40] Ibid., p. 167.
[41] Ibid., p. 169.
[42] Ibid., p. 185.
[43] Ibid., p. 208.
[44] Ibid., p. 248.
[45] Ibid., p. 278.

this defect provincial finance was introduced under which the government of India distributed some of its funds among the provinces and the provinces undertook to manage some of the services on behalf of the government of India within the sums thus allocated.

Provincial finance was really of the nature of departmental finance. Notwithstanding in provincial finance nothing was provincial in status. Provincial finance was a matter of accounts, the operations on the debit and credit sides of which were subject to stringent control by the government of India. Provincial finance was worth striving for and had conferred great benefits upon India by delegating to the provinces what were really matters of detail and therefore could be economically handled by the provincial government. Later events led to the inauguration of provincial autonomy in terms of Government of India Act, 1935. Opposing the provincial autonomy, Ambedkar argued that the power would go to the classes and not to the masses.

Article 277 of the Constitution of India gave the President discretion to modify the allocations under the following three heads: (1) proceeds of income tax, (2) a share of the central excise duties, and (3) certain grants and subventions. H. N. Kunzru in his amendment criticised this. He said: "If the provinces are not even to enjoy financial autonomy in certain circumstances, they will have no independence left whatsoever and their position will be equivalent to that of the municipalities and district boards. The article 277 is an expression of nothing but the undiluted financial autocracy of the centre."[46] To this Ambedkar replied,

> "There is no reason to suppose or to make an arbitrary suggestion that the President is going to wipe out altogether the total proceeds which the provinces are entitled to receive under the allocation... I, therefore, think that it would be very wrong to tie own the hands of the President to act in a particular manner and not leave him the liberty or discretion to act in many other ways that might suggest themselves to him."[47]

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46. Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. IX, p. 508.
47. Ibid., p. 527.

He said further, "the power to Parliament practically means leaving it to the voice of those provinces who happen to have a larger representation at the centre, and that, I think, would cut at the root of the justice which you want to be done to the various provinces." The President was guided by the recommendations of the finance commission. The finance commission was a buffer between the President and the provinces which may be clamouring for more revenue from income tax.[48]

In the manifesto of the Independent Labour Party (1936), Ambedkar had dealt with the problem of taxation. He characterised the system of taxation prevailing at that time as unjust; because it weighed heavily on poorer sections. He objected to the system of levying land revenue and undertaking legislation to make it more equitable and more elastic. In a meeting held at Ahmedabad in 1938, he criticised the government of Bombay, because it did not reduce the land revenues nor was it prepared to tax the rich. The main plank of taxation policy as advocated by him was (1) tax must be levied on the taxable capacity and not on the income; (2) the tax must be progressive, i.e. the rich must be taxed more and the poor less; (3) exemptions to taxpayers below a certain limit; and (4) the land revenue item must not be rigid, but elastic and subject to variations. He emphasised the necessity of changing the attitude towards the taxes. He said, "Taxation system alternated on two points: (1) There should be equity between different classes, and (2) no taxation system should be manipulated as to lower the standard of living of the people."[49] He pointed out one defect of the financial system. The defect was that the provinces were largely dependent for their resources upon the grants made to them by the centre. He justified that sales tax must be in the hands of the provinces because that was one important source of revenue.[50] He argued,

> "If we permit the sales tax to be levied by the provinces, then the provinces must be free to adjust the rate of the sales tax to the changing situation of the province, and therefore a ceiling from the centre would be a great handi-

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48. Ibid., p. 315.
49. Ibid., Vol. X, p. 339.
50. Ibid., p. 339.

> cap in the working of the sales tax. The sales tax in its fundamental character must be a tax on consumption."[51]

Some objections were raised in the Constituent Assembly that the taxes on the advertisements would infringe article 13 of the Constitution, and that they were ultra vires. Ambedkar refused to accept this interpretation. His contention was :

> "....if you say that because fundamental rights are guaranteed therefore the taxation power should also not be exercised because that would result in the limitation or the destruction of the fundamental rights, it is too large a proposition and I do not think that anybody will ever accept this."[52]

In support to his argument, he gave references of the attitude taken by the supreme court of the United States of America. The supreme court's contention was that fundamental rights, however fundamental they may be, could not be absolute rights. They must be subject to certain limitations.

On many occasions Ambedkar has referred to the general budgeting and has complained against meagre provision for social expenditure. According to him, there was no provision for all the social benefits, and the army was eating into the vitals of the funds. These were the two main planks of attack on the general budget adopted by him. He was at a loss to know why the government of India was consistently and regularly increasing the military budget.

Ambedkar had supported the measure to tax the estates. But he was at a loss to know how the authorities were going to find out what estate a deceased person has left. The difficulty was to find out who was dead and when he was dead. In England, the operation of the estate duty bill becomes simple because everybody dies after making a will.[53] Revenue officers have to go to the registrar of the high court in order to find out whether any application has been made for a probate. But in India people have not got the habit of obtaining the probate. He

[51] Ibid., p. 340.

[52] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 863.

[53] Rajya Sabha Debates, 27 May 1952, pp. 469-80.

also quoted from the report of the UNESCO to justify the taxation system for capital formation. The report found out why the Asiatic countries were so backward in the matter of their industrial and economic advancement. The report laid down the reason that the saving in these countries was so small that there was no capital formation at all. If there was no capital formation, there would be no industry. Discussing the need for capital formation, he remarked,

> "If we were a communist country—and I have no doubt that we shall very soon become one or our economic life, or industrial life, or agricultural life, taken charge of by the government—it would matter very little, how much we save and how much we do not save. But so long as we have not got a communist regime which takes complete responsibility for the welfare of the people and their education it is very necessary that our taxing system should be such that it should leave sufficient for the purpose of creating capital."[54]

Ambedkar traced the history of the estate duty bill in the Central Assembly. There was no such provision in the 1935 act. For the first time such a bill was adumbrated in the year 1944-45 by Sir Jeremy Raisman, who was in charge of the finance portfolio. In 1946, Sir Archibald Rolands brought forward a bill but it was opposed by Congress and the Muslim League members. Therefore, the measure was dropped. In 1948, Sir Shanmukham Chetty, the then finance minister of India, introduced this measure. It was referred to the select committee. The select committee's view was that so long as there was mitakshar law, it would be of no use to have such a measure. Under the mitakshar law, there was no such thing as the passing of the property because the property was already his by birth.[55] This difficulty had been got over by practically destroying the mitakshar law (clause 7). In the course of his speech he said that forty-four countries had estate duty.

[54] Ibid., 18 September 1953, p. 2807.
[55] Ibid.

SECTION 4—MISCELLANEOUS PROBLEMS

The food situation in the country worsened in 1952-53. The policy of not giving subsidy to the consumer, but giving it to the producer had not produced the effect desired by the finance minister. According to Ambedkar, the reasons of failure of the campaign (grow more food) consisted in the contradictory policy of the food department and the government of India; and the tendency to produce cash crops was an impediment in the way of producing more food. He asserted, "Government should curb the tendency to produce something other than food."[56] He hoped that the finance minister might reconsider his line and stop the dichotomy in the cash crops versus food production and consider the report of the Reserve Bank of India which showed that the grow more food policy has been a complete failure.[57] In his speech he urged the government to continue the subsidy to relieve the people of the high cost of living.

The famines and shortages of food were attributed to the foreign rule, but Ambedkar warned that they must not go by such cheap propaganda. Every flaw must not be attributed to foreign rule. He warned in his speech in the Rajya Sabha that the arguments that the British left us with our resources undeveloped and the people untrained for economic production would not solve the problems.

In the Bombay Legislative Council (1938), Ambedkar had introduced a bill on the salaries of the ministers. According to him, there were four considerations: the social standard, competency, democracy, integrity and purity of administration. He urged that the bill should not be carried through party vote. He provided the figures of salaries which ministers in foreign countries or in other provinces get. He pleaded for more salary.

Pandit Thakurdas Bhargava in moving an amendment in the Constituent Assembly said: "It is the desire of Ambedkar that the subjects like cow slaughter instead of being included in fundamental rights should be incorporated in the directive principles." According to Ambedkar, the amendment fulfilled the object and was midway between the directive principles and the fundamental rights. It stated that: (1) Agriculture should be improved on scientific and modern lines; (2) cattle-breed should be improved; (3) cows and other cattle should be protected from slaughter. Thus the whole agricultural and food problem of this country was nothing but the problem of the improvement of cow and her breed. During Muslim rule cow slaughter was not practised in India. In China, cow slaughter is a crime. This amendment of Pandit Bhargava was accepted by Ambedkar.[58]

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[56] Ibid., 27 May, 1952, pp. 469-80.
[57] Ibid.

Ambedkar was firm that increase in the manufacture of illicit liquor was entirely due to high tariff on country liquor. He said: "The problem depends upon the financial solution of the question."[59] He urged the government to control the production and distribution of liquor. Distribution must be on a rationing basis. A medical certificate must be made compulsory. At the tea party held at the HPT College, Nasik, he said that the money that government was raising in the form of taxes must be utilised to relieve the farmers of their debts, to fight poverty and to impart education, but that it could not be done if prohibition was given a priority or a preference over these urgent problems.[60] In respect of prohibition, the manifesto of SCF asked, "Who has priority? the drunkard or the hungry?"

While explaining and judging the viability of the provinces, Ambedkar said,

> "The excise revenue is being sacrificed for a false ideology which has no meaning, no sense and no reality. In regard to the policy of prohibition followed by the Congress, the following conclusions could be drawn without fear of challenge: (1) An enormous amount of revenue is sacrificed for nothing. (2) People have not ceased to drink. There is enormous amount of illicit manufacture of liquor which is being sold to the public clandestinely. (3) The money lost by government is picked up by the illicit manufacturer. (4) Prohibition has demoralised society. Formerly, only male members of the family drank because they could go to the liquor shop. Now illicit liquor manufacture has become a home-industry. Liquor now being at home both

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[58] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, p. 568.

[59] Keer, op. cit., p. 80.

[60] Ibid., p. 322.

men and women drink. (5) In addition to the loss of revenue on account of prohibition government has to undertake increased expenditure on police to enforce prohibition which, however, they never do."[61]

Ambedkar spoke in Rajya Sabha on the government order in bank disputes. He said that it was not possible to accept the argument that profits had gone down because of heavy wage bill. According to him, none of the three bodies, the Sen Committee, the Sastri Award and the Appellate Tribunal, had felt it necessary to make a distinction between Indian banks and foreign banks in this country. He said further that the foreign exchange banks rendered very little help to indigenous industry or to trade. They imported a large number of their personnel from outside. Indians were employed on the lowest rung of their ladder.[62]

Ambedkar remarked that the industrialisation of India was a necessary thing. But side by side the principle of state management and state ownership of industry must be adopted. Amenities like social insurance and control over employment, dismissal were vital to the progress of industry. About these measaures, the lower middle class must be protected.[63] He remarked that the threatening of nationalisation without any positive step would amount to "sentence of death with stay of execution". He suggested the nationalisation of life insurance and then of bus transport.[64]

The election manifesto of the Scheduled Castes Federation (1952) promised "to strive for redemption from oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, and of nation by nation". The Scheduled Castes Federation further supported the undertaking of industry when it was possible and essential. To raise the finances Ambedkar suggested (1) reduction of expenditure on the army, (2) relevy of the salt tax, (3) abolition of prohibition and the saving of the excise revenue, (4) nationalisation of insurance, (5) compulsory insurance for state and private employees.[65]

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[61] Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, p. 33.
[62] Rajya Sabha Debates, pp. 1207-16.
[63] *The Times of India*, 15 August 1936 and SCF Manifesto, 1952.
[64] Karnik, *Kirloskar* magazine.
[65] *The Times of India*, 15 August 1936 and SCF Manifesto, 1952.

The two directive principles of state policy which directed the state to avoid concentration of economic power are: (1) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good, (2) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment. The Constitution has abolished forced labour and prohibited exploitation of child labour. Property rights are guaranteed. Equal right of work, equal pay for equal work and adequate means of livelihood both to men and women are guaranteed under the state policy. Ambedkar had vigorously justified the above provisions in the Constitution.

Where the state refrained from intervention, what remained was liberty. To whom, and for whom was this liberty? Obviously this liberty was liberty to the landlords to increase rents, and to capitalists to increase hours of work and reduce rates of wages. What was called liberty from the control of the state was another name for the dictatorship of the private employer.[66] The useful remedy adopted by democratic countries was to limit the power of government to impose arbitrary restraints in political domain and invoke the ordinary power of the legislature to restrain the more powerful individual from imposing arbitrary restraints on less powerful in the economic field.[67]

Ambedkar developed a strong faith in equality which, he thought, was the basis of all socialist doctrines. Equality did not mean the identity of treatment or of the equal distribution of wealth. He himself admitted that there could not be ultimate equality among the people so long as men differed in their needs and capacities.[68] His love for equality, like Laski, was also a process of levelling and it included the absence of special privileges and provisions for adequate opportunities to all.

Employment of human labour and therefore opposition to machinery were the backbone of the Gandhian economic thinking. Once Gandhiji said, "I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity."[69] For this he had idolised charkha (spinning wheel) and called "the western civilisation as the creation of satan". Machinery and modern civilisation were thus indispensable for emancipating man from leading the life of a brute, and for providing him with leisure and making a life of culture possible. According to Ambedkar, democratic society cannot be indifferent to machinery. Gandhism might well be suited to a society which did not accept democracy as its ideal. If the above analysis was correct then the slogan of a democratic society was machinery and more machinery, civilisation and more civilisation.[70] He maintained that the ills were not due to machinery and modern civilisation; they were due to wrong social organisation which has made private property and pursuit of personal gain matters of absolute sanctity. He remarked: "In short, Gandhism with its call of back to nature means back to nakedness, back to squalor, back to poverty and back to ignorance for the vast mass of the people."[71]

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[66] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 32.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, p. 39.

[69] Gandhi, *Young India*, 21 January 1921.

The Marxian interpretation of history was not accepted by Gandhiji. "India's history is not one of strained relations between capital and labour"; "Strikers never should depend upon public subscriptions or other charity"[72]; "The kisan movement must be confined to the improvement of status of the kisans and the betterment of the relations between the zamindars and kisans"[73]—these assertions of Gandhiji, according to Ambedkar, were a sufficient proof that Gandhiji did not wish to hurt the propertied class. He referred that class as "the hen that lays the golden egg". He thought that Gandhism was merely repeating the views of Rousseau, Ruskin, Tolstoy and their school. He thought that the trusteeship theory of Gandhiji was ridiculous and silly.[74] He remarked, "Gandhism is a paradox. It seeks to maintain intact a social structure which permits the domination of one class by another on a hereditary basis which means a perpetual domination of one class by another."[75]

Ambedkar characterised Gandhism as conservatism in excelsis, and purely imaginary. He remarked that Gandhism meant return to the village and making the village selfsufficient and as such it made Gandhism a mere matter of regionalism. In his opinion it was not a revolutionay creed. It was a reactionary creed blazing on its banner the call of return to antiquity. It was reanimation of India's dead past. In conclusion, he said that Gandhism was the philosophy of the well-to-do and the leisured class. It deluded people into accepting their misfortunes by presenting them as best of good fortunes. He thought that Gandhism sought to perpetuate the system of scavenging by praising scavenging as the noblest service to society. But these were evils that were deliberately imposed by one class over another.

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[70] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 284.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., p. 279.

[73] Ibid., p. 231.

[74] Ibid., p. 285.

[75] Ibid., p. 280.

SECTION 5—AMBEDKAR AS AN ECONOMIST

Ambedkar had expressed his views on land reform, mode of farming and industrialisation on different occasions. The underlying motive of all his thinking was to lift the untouchable classes who were predominantly landless or small peasant cultivators. His views thoroughly denoted his progressive nature. The outmoded methods of .cultivation were on the wane, and they must be supplanted by joint or collective farming—was his basic dominating thought.

The problem of agricultural labourers could not be solved within the ambit of even a reformed and improved agriculture and that industrialisation alone was the only ultimate remedy for effecting significant improvement in their condition. As regards industrialisation, it must be said that in countries where there is surplus human labour industrialisation alone is of no use. The divorce of industry from agriculture is harmful to national economy, and the organisation of agriculture with processing industries would help to solve the problem of the peasantry. It must be conceded that industrialisation, and particularly rural industrialisation, as well as reformed agriculture were necessary to secure redeployment of the labour force so as to relieve unemployment, open and concealed.

In this connection, it is necessary to see what other authorities say about the land problem and its solution in India. Dr Raj

Krishna of Delhi University has discussed "Some Aspects of Land Reform and Economic Development in India". The land reform measures are classified by him as liberative, distributive, organisational and developmental. It was suggested that liberative, distributive and organisational measures should be regarded as the three subtypes of land reform or agrarian reform measures. These, it is agreed, determined the institutional framework of the agricultural society in which farmers engaged in productive activity and shared its fruits.[76] Dr Raj Krishna then proceeded to trace how the present policy has emerged. The Agrarian Reforms Committee (1949) appointed by the Congress recommended cooperative joint farming only for below-basic holdings, and for the cultivation of surplus land acquired through the imposition of ceilings. The First Five-Year Plan recommended experimental encouragement to cooperative farming in the immediate future, but the "comprehensive goal" was "cooperative village management". Land management legislation was recommended to enable the village community to "manage the entire area of a village, both cultivated and uncultivated; as if it were a single farm".[77] "Cooperative farming necessarily implies pooling of land for its joint management."[78] If we scrutinise the policy of the Indian National Congress, we find that there was a shift to a policy of "democratic collectivisation".[79] The resolution on land problems passed in January 1959 at the sixtieth session of the Indian National Congress recommended the cultivation of surplus lands by joint farming cooperatives of the landless. It contained ceilings on land and joint farming. Thus the policy of imposing ceilings was inseparably linked with the policy of introducing joint farming.

Capital formation is the important factor which gives impetus to the whole economic production. The process can be taken advantage of in two ways: surplus labour in the countryside can be more effectively utilised for physical capital formation; and the marketable surplus will increase and capital formation in the urban sector will be accelerated. Employment opportunities in different fields will be available.[80]

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[76] Walter Froechlich, *Land Tenure, Industrialization and Social Stability*, pp. 215-17.

[77] Ibid., p. 195.

[78] Ibid., p. 201.

[79] Ibid., p. 233.

To put in Dr Raj Krishna's terms, Ambedkar was in favour of all the three types of rural reforms—liberative, redistributional and organisational. He perhaps stressed the liberative but also saw that the three aspects were essential for an all-India solution. The solution of the Harijan problem of landless labourers was dependent upon the solution of the Indian agricultural problem or more broadly the Indian economic problem. The strategy of the untouchables had to be fitted in a broader national strategy, for a broader economic development.

Ambedkar advocated that land revenue must be brought under the income tax provisions. The Taxation Enquiry Commission under the chairmanship of Dr John Matthai had also advocated the above view. His insistence on abolition of landlordism and the abolition of Mahar watan were remarkable. He regarded it an economic struggle or rather a form of struggle of oppressed classes against the exploiter classes.

The *Problem of the Rupee* was an exceedingly instructive treatise on a terribly controversial subject. Ambedkar tackled the problem of the rupee in all its details. He traced its history, analysed all sorts of opinions and finally gave us his verdict that the problem had arisen on account of the neglect by those in power of the truth that it was the internal purchasing power of the rupee which was of primary importance and not its exchange value as has been assumed and worked upon by them. According to him, stability of a currency in terms of gold was of importance only to the dealers in gold, but its stability in terms of commodities in general affected all. This highly important aspect of a gold currency was overlooked by our rulers during several decades. The closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver in 1893 was the outcome of a great and continued fall in the purchasing power of the rupee. But this step did not lead to any stoppage of the depreciation. Why? Because although the people could no longer bring silver to the mint, the government could and did. So fervently did they go in for rupee coinage that prices rose in India during 1893-1914 even more than in

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80. Ibid., p. 248.

other countries. This was due to the fact that the government coined rupees to meet the demands of the trade of the country during the busy season, but the expansion thus caused could not be remedied by suitable contraction in the slack season. The rupee went out year by year, but never came back to the treasury in proportional quantities after doing their work. Lying in the remotest corners of the country in small pools, they reduced the economic life of the country to the state of a water-logged marsh. Fresh demands by big traders led to fresh coinage every year and the cumulative effect of this made the problem of rising prices progressively serious.

This was due to the fact that the rupee currency could not be contracted normally, as in the case of a gold currency, by export or melting on account of its lower specie value. And the economic structure of Indian society was such that money once set into circulation did not return easily and quickly to the fountainhead. So Ambedkar prescribed closing the door of the mints not only to the people but also to the government (beyond a limit). According to him, this would prevent inflation and disturbances in the internal price level. The standard of value should be gold and the elasticity of the currency should come from this source. With a gold basis both expansion and contraction should be easy.

Ambedkar has shown great scholarship and put a tremendous amount of hard work in this book. It beat all other treatises on the rupee by a good many lengths and was a notewothy contribution to Indian economics. He won laurels by this exceedingly thought-provoking book. The following are some press opinions:

The Times (London): "Excellent piece of work. English style is easy and his knowledge of his subject obviously very full."

The Economist (London): "It is a clear and ably written book. Certainly none of the other numerous works on one or other aspect of the monetary problem have anything like the readability of this tract."

The Scotsman: "His work throughout shows the utmost care and is clearly the fruit of painstaking research... The book (to which Professor Cannan contributes a foreword) is, on account of the originality of its treatment, to be commended to all students of the finances of India."

The Financier: "Ambedkar deals with the problem in a very lucid and praiseworthy manner and puts forward not merely its origin but also valuable proposals for a solution, which should be studied by bankers and those merchants whose business depends upon the exchange."[81]

The noted economist, Professor Edwin Cannan (Ambedkar's teacher), who wrote the foreword disagreed with some of his criticism, but he said, "even when I have thought him quite wrong, I have found a stimulating freshness in his views and reasons". In the practical conclusion, Professor Cannan said that Ambedkar was right. Writers on Indian currency problems have referred to this book and even included extracts in textbooks. "Dr Ambedkar advocates the gold currency standard and favours an inconvertible rupee with a fixed limit of issue. His exposition throughout is clear, his arguments sound and convincing."[82]

Ambedkar's views in *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India* comprised his study in the provincial decentralisation of imperial finance. In his foreword Professor R. A. Seligman said, "The value of Ambedkar's contribution to this discussion lies in the objective recitation of the facts and the impartial analysis of the interesting development that has taken place in his country. Nowhere to my knowledge has such a detailed study of the underlying principles been made."

Ambedkar's views on nationalisation of industries and life insurance showed his deep study of India's economic problems. The formation of the public sector and the establishment of Life Insurance Corporation showed that he was in agreement with other leading statesmen-economists. His views on prohibition were also with the march of the time.

According to Ambedkar, the fundamental cause of India's backward economy was the delay in changing the land system in India's villages. The real remedy was democratic collectivism in which economic efficiency, productivity and overhauling village economy are materialised. It aimed at wiping out completely elements of economic exploitation and social injustice. He wanted that there should be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer. He wanted both freedom and welfare, which were

[81] Bombay University, Ambedkar Collections.

[82] *The Times of India*, 11 February 1948.

possible in his idea of economic realism. He realised that no proper place was given to landless labourers in cooperative farming.

His idea of nationalisation of agriculture was hardly practicable or realisable; because it was opposed by reactionary forces. The essential feature of his approach to economic problems was his condemnation of extreme views like laissez-faire and scientific socialism. Therefore, mixed economy was the cornerstone of his philosophy. He stood for the progressive transformation of society, removing glaring social and economic inequalities that were due to the capitalist system. His idea of economic relationship was rational in so far as it insisted on the economic welfare of the poorer sections of society and regarded economic values as a means and not as an end in themselves.

His advocacy of state socialism, and inclusion of the principles of socialism in the directive principles of state policy, and adoption of parliamentary democracy as a means to establish socialism deserve careful attention. His concept of society and socialism aimed for the welfare of the poor classes, ending inequality based on birth, eliminating discriminatory practices in social behaviour patterns, reorganising the political economy for the benefit of all, maintaining full employment and education, providing social security for the weak and the sick, and finally rebuilding Indian society on the foundation of cooperation, love and friendship rather than the division of men into rigid social barrier. The trend towards this aim in Indian society could be accelerated by conscious democratic effort. The aim could be accomplished only by educating the people and struggling for democracy and socialism.

It was evident that Ambedkar's political economy had a moral purpose. It studied economic activity from the point of view of its effect on human welfare. It was not concerned with wealth or economic relations as such, but in their relations to man and his choices. What matters much was the distribution of wealth equitably among the common people. In this respect he was in agreement with economists like Sismondi, Ricardo and Malthus to whom the problems of distribution were more important than any other economic problems.

The rightist parties like Swatantra, Jana Sangh and others always criticised and put hindrance in the way of the onward march of socialism. Ambedkar's support to the progressive steps of socialism had the basic idea that its practical application would facilitate the solution of the problems of the underprivileged.

Ambedkar as an economist was a reflection of Ambedkar as a politician-statesman. He wrote on economic matters when it became expedient in the field of politics. The dominance of political activities overshadowed his study of economics and it will not be out of place if we say that we have suffered a great loss in losing in him an economist of no mean ability.

Chapter Fifteen

AMBEDKAR AS A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THINKER

During the span of about forty years of his public life Ambedkar went through various stages.

The first period from 1918 to 1928 can be called the preparatory period in which he established himself as a lawyer, and won the highest degree in economics for his thesis "The Problem of the Rupee". At Mahad he led the satyagraha struggle for securing human rights of drinking water from public lakes to untouchables. He continued to uphold the need for human dignity, honesty, equality and liberty, rights and civic facilities for the untouchables.

In the second period from 1929 to 1936 he gave a constitutional fight to acquire separate electorates for untouchables. He reconstructed his thought in the light of the political situation in the country and his experience. In theory, separate electorates meant political separation of the servile classes from the high-caste Hindus. He conceived that those who were socially segregated must also be politically separate. He argued that "the untouchables were a separate element in the national life of India".[1] He advocated the provision of "separate settlements" for the untouchables. Gandhiji remarked that "it will create a division of Hinduism"; but Ambedkar had intense feeling of revolt against the Hindu social order, and at the Yeola Conference he declared his intention to renounce Hinduism.

In the third period from 1937 to 1946 he organised the Independent Labour Party (and won 13 out of 15 reserved seats for scheduled castes and in addition it won two general seats in the Bombay Legislative Council in 1937). He was an opposition leader in Bombay legislature and later he became the labour member in Viceroy's Executive Council in 1942. He occupied the same position up to 1946, i.e. when the talks of transfer of power were going on.

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[1] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 88.

In the fourth period, he worked effectively as the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India and became known as the "Modern Manu". He was then the law member of the first cabinet of independent India; and then after his resignation he worked as opposition leader in Parliament.

In the last period, defeat in the parliamentary election; and in 1956, he embraced Buddhism and led thousands of his followers to Buddhism and emerged openly as the protagonist of Buddhism as against Marxism. A strong feeling developed in him then that social emancipation of untouchables and downtrodden and their political aspirations must be subordinated to religious sentiments and reform movements. He no more laid emphasis on his previous insistence on separate electorates, separate settlements and the like.

When he saw that political freedom was in the offing, he laid emphasis on adult franchise. Religious awakening and social reform became the touchstones of his whole thinking process. He laid emphasis on the collective aspects of human life. He thought that the balance between material and spiritual awakening must be struck; as without it a developing society could not flourish.

In all these periods, he came before his countrymen and before the world as a professor, a barrister, an erudite person, a legislator, a constitutionalist, a social reformer, a political leader, a cabinet minister, a "Modern Manu" (constitution-maker) and above all the community leader.

One could not help admiring Ambedkar, however violently one might disagree with him. Born the lowest of the low, he reached the highest of the high positions. But it could not be denied that he was one of the most erudite among Indian leaders. India, Britain, the USA, Germany—all these countries have showered their academic honours upon him. Economist and lawyer, professor and author, fighter and politician—there were several facets of his career. What Johnson said about Goldsmith may be said about Ambedkar : "He touched nothing that he did not adorn."

SECTION 1—SOCIAL THOUGHT

Ambedkar's thinking arose out of his acute dissatisfaction with the anomalous treatment meted out to his community by the Hindus of the socalled higher castes. He was a champion of a revolution to be brought about by the dynamics of public opinion, through a change in the laws of the land. He was not a utopian, but a realist. He had a strong idealism, but it was not warped by wrong considerations.

The roots of his philosophy were not in politics but in religion. His philosophy was such as would facilitate the social revolution in India. The social idealism and political idealism were opposed to each other. The political idealism sanctified freedom and equality but social idealism had discarded them. He earnestly wished that the political idealism of the majority would become the social idealism of all.[2] His philosophy was occupied with social amelioration, political enlightenment and spiritual awakening. For this, it attached due importance to the economic well-being of the masses. To him, political thought embodied a social dynamism because of man's attitude as a political animal and social being. He had a deep faith in fundamental human rights, in the equal rights of man and woman, in the dignity of the individual, in social and economic justice, in the promotion of social progress and better standards of life with peace and security in all spheres of human life. His study of social facts enriched his political philosophy. It led him to practical politics and at the same time he applied ethical and moral tradition to it.

Ambedkar throughout his life fought against Brahminism and against the tyrannical practices of the caste system. He regarded that the caste system must be annihilated, because it was inhuman and detrimental to the upward march of the untouchables. He regarded that the waging of battle against caste system was tantamount to the battle against untouchability. From Montford Reforms up to Cabinet Mission Proposals he was invited to represent his community and in all these years and in all such events he did his duty to the best of his ability. He told Cripps that he preferred to be a leader of his community than to be a labour leader. He judged everybody by the standard of his services to the depressed classes. The essence of his all-India leadership could be seen in his loyalty to his community. His loyalty to his community resulted in creating a sense of selfrespect among its members. He always placed the freedom and welfare of his community above the attainment of swaraj.[3]

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[2] Ambedkar, All India Radio Speech, 3 October 1954.

Ambedkar was a believer in women's progress. He measured the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women achieved. He fought for human rights equally for both, men and women. He advised women to learn, to be clean, keep away from vices, give education to their children, remove from them all inferiority complex, instil ambition into them, inculcate in their minds that they were destined to be great and not to be in a hurry to marry. He always said, "Never regard yourself an untouchable."[4]

In the limited economic struggle at the village level, the lines of class and caste intersected each other, and a real class struggle was regarded as a struggle between lower and higher castes. The landless labourers became industrial workers and left their age-old villages. The untouchables became workers and went to the industrial towns. The spread of the new education brought forth a new middle class among untouchables and that class took the reins of the whole emancipation movement of untouchables in its hands; and the industrial workers became the centres of the movement of untouchables. This could be seen from the diverse fields of activity of Ambedkar.

According to Ambedkar success in life meant success in raising the depressed classes to the status of human beings. He said, "Whatever I have achieved it is entirely due to the strength of my community. I am proud to have born a Harijan."[5] In a different context he said, "My criterion of my work is the welfare of my community. I have no other ambition. For that only I cooperated with Congress. By achieving this I have never did any harm to other sections of society." He expressed his desire to devote himself to the village community in his later life. In a speech which he made on 18 March 1955, he outlined three objects of his life : (1) to spread education, (2) to give more representation to the untouchables in government services, and (3) to improve the condition of the untouchables in the villages. In the end he observed that "as long as the untouchables are not ready to leave villages their condition will not be improved".[6] On another occasion he wept when he thought of "what is going to happen to my brethren in the villages?", because he always visualised the caste tyranny in villages.[7]

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[3] Ambedkar, *Janata*, Special Number.

[4] Keer, *Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, pp. 104-5.

[5] *The Times of India*, Bombay, 29 October 1954.

His theories about the origin of untouchability and Shudras were and are controversial, but his efforts to solve the problem were noteworthy. It shows his scholarship.

His attacks on vedic religion and Brahminism aroused hopes in the minds of the satyashodhakas (seekers of truth). In their degenerate philosophy of anti-Brahminism, they tried to take Ambedkar with them, but Ambedkar knew them and their behaviour towards untouchables. They were bent upon destroying the cultural hegemony of Brahmins, but he rightly knew that they had forgotten the tenets of Phooley and led the movement into communal channels. He chastised them for their shameless betrayal of the just cause. His courage in this respect is noteworthy.

Ambedkar fought many struggles for social equality. At Mahad he led the satyagraha campaign against the unjust ban on the use of water of a lake. The waging of a battle against social bans he regarded as his religion. At Kala Ram Mandir at Nasik, he tried to get the gates of the temples opened to the untouchables. His attitude to the temple entry movement was justified; but he thought that the way to lift the untouchables lay in their social elevation and not in temple entry. This lesson was rightly emphasised by him. His social thought was dominated by his urge to lift the untouchable community, and break the shackles of casteism and Brahminism. The way he chose may be controversial, but his urge to raise the status of untouchables could not be doubted. Though he did more important things

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6. Ambedkar, *Letters to Gaekwad*, p. 328.
7. *Mahanirvan* Special Number.

and took a leading part in drafting the Constitution of India, still the thought of his community always dominated his mind.

Ambedkar's chief concern in life was to meet the challenge of wrongly idealised social relations which threatened the whole of human existence and shook the foundations of a moral and just social order. The aim of his mission was to arouse in men and women the passion for right relations. His purpose was practical rather than speculative and his philosophy of life was essentially a development and evolution under conditions and events that prevailed in Indian society. He as a genius was not merely a learned man, but also an intellectual, who sacrificed his life for the dignity and uplift of the poorest of the poor of the world. As a spokesman of ignored humanity, he created human rights for all and tried to bring all men on a par socially. His aim was not communal and limited to personal benefit, but it was essentially social and human, related to all who suffered from slavery, injustice, tyranny and exploitation. He broke the shackles of traditionalism, religious orthodoxy and blind superstition. He never thought of the ethical and moral sides of any problem in an isolated manner; but he took a broad view of life and considered them collectively.

On the whole, he was the spokesman of ignored humanity. He categorically remarked, "It is my solemn vow to die in the service and cause of those downtrodden people among whom I was born, I was brought up and I am living."[8] He stood for all scientific and artistic activities which enhanced the cause of human progress and happiness. He could not tolerate the unjust environment—social, economic, religious, political—which had been holding humanity in fetters for centuries. During his revolt he developed a sort of socio-ethical philosophy, which continued to grow in a sporadic manner till the last day of his life. He stood for human dignity and freedom, for simplicity, integrity, liberty, equality, social and economic justice, material prosperity and spiritual discipline and he was opposed to any social order or institution or any creed or practice, which involved injustice, violence and suppression of human personality.

Ambedkar turned the movement of the removal of untouchability into the channels of conversion to Buddhism. He aimed at

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8. Keer, op. cit., p. 202.

removing untouchability and establishing social equality; for these ends he asked his followers to embrace Buddhism. In his view, Buddha rightly accepted the following three points from Kapila's theses, viz that reality must rest on proof and must be based on rationalism, that there was no logical or factual basis for the assumption that god existed and that he created the world; and that there was misery in the world. He rejected the whole system of Brahminical religion, i.e. the infallibility of the Vedas, transmigration, the efficacy of rites, the moksha after the cycle of births and Isvara as the creater of universe. He rejected the whole of Upanishadic thought as mere imagination.[9] He reinterpreted Buddhism as a principle of utilitarianism. He thought whatever was useful to the social amelioration of mankind was a genuine and original part of Buddhist canonical literature.

Ambedkar's importance was bound up with his continuance as an untouchable. If he would have converted himself to Christianity or Islam, he would have been one in a crowd. He vigorously defended conversion, but it seemed that he looked upon Buddhism as a relief from caste-ridden and untouchability-bound Hinduism. In conversion, he saw the way of salvation from the slavery of caste Hindus. The untouchables had acquired political equality, but adopted conversion to eradicate social injustices. His social thought in this democratic age could be justified, but his movement to conversion of untouchables to Buddhism could not be justified.

The characteristics of the caste system are visible in this process also. The converts are regarded as Nava Baudha (Neo-Buddhists) untouchables. So change of religion would not do, it may on the contrary sidetrack the main issue. The process of conversion which nearly came to end after Ambedkar's death amply proved its inadequacy and ineffectiveness as a weapon to ameliorate the conditions of the downtrodden untouchables and maintain social equality. It can be said that his movement of conversion originated in his frustration to end the evil practices of cast system and it demonstrated his leap into escapism. It was a notable thing that the idea of conversion was not taken up by the untouchables as a class. On the contrary, some of his followers opposed his programme of conversion on ideological and practical grounds.

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[9] Ambedkar, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, I, VII, p. 11.

SECTION 2—POLITICAL THOUGHT

Ambedkar in his writings has expressed his views on many political issues. They comprised the theoretical as well as practical side. From the function of the state to the intricacies of every small detail of the Constitution, he has adumbrated his political thought. This is an attempt to outline his thoughts on various topics in political science.

Ambedkar attached more importance to society than to the state. The state, to him, has "to provide against internal disorder and external aggression".[10] He did not consider state to be an absolute one. He did not agree with the idealist view of the state as a separate, mystic personality, "a march of god on earth" upon which the individual depended for his existence. To him, it was the people who made the state and without them there could be no state. The ultimate aim of the state was to enable man to achieve the best on earth. In this sense, the state was a means rather than an end in itself and it owed to its members a duty to build and sustain a social system within which man might live happily.

He did not agree with Hobbes, Hegel, Bosanquet, the supporters of the absolute theory of the state. He accepted the idea of state as a human organisation, but not the final one, as its supporters believed, because there were many other sources of thought and action. To him, stability of the state rested on deference and sympathy. He was therefore against the doctrine of civil disobedience. He remarked, "To believe in civil disobedience is to believe in anarchy."[11] He conceived the state as an organisation the aim of which was "(1) to maintain the right of every subject to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness and to free speech and free exercise of religion; (2) to remove social, political and economic inequality by providing better opportunities to the

[10] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 3.

[11] Ambedkar, *Pakistan and Partition*, p. 294.

submerged classes, and (3) to make it possible for every subject to enjoy freedom from want and freedom from fear".[12] The state had to serve the interests of man and society as a servant and not as a master. So he stood for people's freedom and rights in postindependence India. He attached more importance to the eternal struggle of man for freedom. To him, the true freedom of man was not merely political. It was also social, economic, intellectual and spiritual.

Ambedkar endeavoured to strike a balance between the central authority of the state and the liberty of the individual, though individual freedom should not affect adversely the best interests of society and state for benefiting a particular class. To him, the state was not an end in itself, but only a means for the furtherance of human ends in the interests of a better future society. This was the meaning which he attached to the concept of the state in his political thought. He did not agree with totalitarianism. He was also opposed to the Machiavellian principle of state—governing the people and keeping them down. He combined individual respect with faith in state organisation. It was man's faith and obedience to the state that could help it in discharging its most sacred duties for the happiness and welfare of the people. According to him, a state was realistic and practical when it provided the practical needs of the people. The state in this sense was moral and social in character. He did not want any state to restrict the movements of its citizens. According to him, a good state was that which guaranteed protection against persecution of one community by another and also against internal disturbances, violence and disorder in any part of its territory.[13] It meant that the state was not an absolute one. It had to obey the wishes of the people. There should be harmony between different organisations existing in the state.

Being himself a lawyer by profession and a jurist by temperament, Ambedkar emphasised the role of law in civilised society. To him, law was an important factor in maintaining social peace and justice among different groups of people. It is an obligation which depended upon the social and moral conscience of the people. It was a guardian of equality and liberty. "All citizens are equal before the law and possess equal civic rights."[14] To him, law has not only a legal function, it also regulated the life of the whole society and nation as well. It kept within limits all men irrespective of caste, colour or creed. "Law to him is secular, which anybody may break while fraternity or religion is sacred which everybody must respect."[15] His faith in individual liberty and dignity led him to the rule of law. He said, "No state shall make or enforce any law or custom which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty and property without the process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of law."[16]

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[12] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 3.

[13] Ibid., pp. 108-11.

Ambedkar regarded rights as "natural" and "inherent" in the individual, i.e. "the individual has certain inalienable rights".[17] He built his theory of social and political organisation around his central concept of the individual and his rights. To him, the state existed only to prevent injustice, tyranny and oppression. It thus had to serve the people—the weak and the needy.[18] He remarked,

> "Rights are protected not by law but by the social and moral conscience of society. If social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognise the rights which law chooses to enact, rights will be safe and secure. But if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no Parliament, no judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word."[19]

He tried to seek harmony between the people and the legal power of the state. Laws of the state affected the standard of morality and, similarly, the ideas of right and wrong.

According to Ambedkar, it was the American and not the British pattern which would suit the Indian situation. His main concern was how to establish a proper relation between the legislative and the executive bodies in order that they might work

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14. Ibid., p. 9.
15. Keer, op. cit., p. 456.
16. Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 9.
17. Ibid., p. 32.
18. Ambedkar's Address to AISCF Session, Bombay, 6 May 1945.
19. Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, pp. 34-35.

independently and simultaneously and be answerable and cooperative to each other. This depended upon the unity and sincerity of purpose of both the organs of government. He did not favour the executive of the British type, because he thought if applied to India perilous consequences would follow. In the British Parliament, he maintained, the majority is a political majority, but "the majority in India is a communal majority. That being the difference, the presumption that arose in England could not be regarded as a valid presumption in the conditions of India."[20] There is no obligation upon the majority to include in its cabinet the representatives of the minorities. Therefore he feared that minorities would be crushed. The above type of government, he thought, would not be a true form of parliamentary system of government in India. He regarded it as "imperialism", for he thought an executive of the British type would be full of menace to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of the minorities in general and the depressed classes in particular.

His whole theory of democratic (political) organisation, to use the language of Montesquieu, may be characterised as "a theory of checks and balances". According to him, the executive is intended: (i) to prevent the majority from forming a government without giving any opportunity to the minorities to have a say in the matter; (ii) to prevent the majority from having executive control over administration and thereby make the tyranny of the minority by the majority possible; (iii) to prevent the inclusion by the majority party in the executive representatives of the minorities who have no confidence of the minorities; (iv) to provide a stable executive necessary for good and efficient administration.[21]

Referring to the functions of the judiciary, Ambedkar said, "When the Constitution guarantees rights it also becomes necessary to make provision to prevent the legislative and the executive from overriding them. This function has been usually assigned to the judiciary and the courts have been made the special guardians of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution."[22]

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[20] Ambedkar, *States and Minorities*, p. 36.
[21] Ibid., p. 39.
[22] Ibid., p. 28.

He conceived two objectives: (i) to give the fullest power to the judiciary to issue what, under the English law, are called prerogative writs, (ii) to prevent the legislative from curtailing these powers in any manner whatsoever. He stressed the need for an independent judiciary to safeguard the rights of individuals. He intended to create a judiciary and give it ample independence so that it could function without fear or favour of the executive or anybody else. In our Constitution, he has worked out this principle making it a blend of British and American constitutions.

In his statements before the Southborough Committee, Ambedkar was for joint electorates, then he advocated separate electorates for the scheduled castes at the RTC and and when he visualised that the British were about to transfer power to Indians, he advocated joint electorates, and joined the Constituent Assembly and became the chairman of the Drafting Committee. He expressly told in the Constituent Assembly that he had joined it only to safeguard the interests of his community. He bitterly criticised the British government for their inability to end the oppressive practices of untouchability and bring about the all-round progress of the untouchables. But under foreign domination only verbal criticism was of no use. He bitterly repudiated the national "struggle" for independence and its emblem Gandhiji and the gulf between the nationalist movement and the untouchables was widened. Though the removal of untouchability was one of the programmes of the Congress and the nationalist movement supported it, still he believed that the Congress attitude towards untouchables was governed more by political opportunism than a stirring of social conscience. He unequivocally refused to recognise the claim of the Congress to speak for his community. He asserted that the Harijan Sevak Sangh which Gandhiji inspired was political charity "which plans to kill the untouchables by kindness". He sought to propound a political thesis on the basis of this social philosophy. His thesis was that the spirit of separatism in Hinduism should be recognised on the political plane and he attempted to equate the caste Hindu-Harijan conflict to an epochal struggle between Brahminism and democracy. Such an attitude was untenable to the popular movement, and because of this bitterness between caste Hindus and untouchables increased, which was inimical to national integration.

The princely states were pockets of British imperial interests and were the strongholds of reaction. People's struggles were taking definite turn in favour of responsible government in the states. Ambedkar supported people's struggles; but at the same time opposed the proposed Indian federation set out in the Government of India Act, 1935, because it made the princes the arbiters of our destiny and it was tantamount to tying down progressive part of India to the chariot of the most unprogressive part and an obstacle in the way of the poor man. When the sovereignty of India was to be transferred, the princes thought that they might become independent. But Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly warned them saying that when the whole of sovereignty was transferred, the territory of that particular ruler became the territory of India with complete sovereignty vested in the Indian union. He issued a statement on 17 June 1947 asking the interim government to notify the British government that the British Parliament had no right to pass any law abrogating paramountcy, not to recognise any Indian state as sovereign independent state, and to inform the UNO not to admit any state which was not sovereign and independent. As regards the problem of Indian states he had taken correct attitude from the point of a nationalist, and it showed his faith in democracy and his profound study of international law.

Ambedkar fully accepted British liberalism and the parliamentary system of democracy. He regarded it as beneficial for the individual and for society as a whole. His favourite political thinker was Edmund Burke. According to him, Indians were governed by the principles—liberty, equality and fraternity—enunciated in the Preamble to the Constitution of India.

Ambedkar's liberalism was combined with a radical rationalism. His ethics were utilitarian; his scale of values was determined by the usefulness of an action towards the establishment of equality in the social order. His liberalism and utilitarianism resulted in his rejection of the teaching of the vedic rishis (seers), because he thought "their contribution to philosophy created no social values".[23]

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[23] Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, I, V, pp. 1, 25.

Liberalism in Maharashtra started in the higher strata of society. Phooley introduced it to lower classes, but more than any other single person, Ambedkar became its champion among the people who were regarded as untouchables and were now, according to the law, sons of free India, equal in rights and standing with other citizens. His contribution to the Constitution of India was a permanent reminder to all citizens to live up to the ideal of liberalism.

The other leaders in social field like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Ranade, Mukerjee, etc. were from the upper classes. As such there was a marked difference between their attitudes and the attitude of the lower class leaders like Ambedkar. He was born an untouchable and therefore he had an intense yearning to see the untouchables better placed. Social reforms got as charity and accommodation Ambedkar rejected; he wanted them as of right. Nobody would question justness of his demand. He said once, "the efforts of others are like a nurse and I am their mother". He remarked that the collapse of the liberal party was not only tragic to the liberals, but to the country.

Ambedkar always looked to the central government to act as "a powerful curb on the provincial majority to save the minorities from the misrule of the majority". He wanted to have a constitution in accordance with the wishes of the people and a strong centre to cope with eventualities—social, economic and political. He stood for the parliamentary form of government.

According to him, there were three features of a parliamentary government:

(1) Negation of hereditary rule. Hereditary rule had no sanction in the parliamentary system of government.

(2) The laws were to be made by the representatives of the people in the Parliament.

He did not want the people to be ruled by a monarch or by any single party. The people should rule themselves through a representative form of government which, he thought, was the best form of human government. It was a human organisation and was most suitable for human progress and happiness.

(3) All legislators were to go back to the people and obtain fresh renewal of their confidence.

He combined good government with selfgovernment. Good selfgovernment was always a representative government. He stood for a selfgovernment which should be both efficient and good. During the freedom movement, he always demanded good selfgovernment efficiently discharging its duties of service and sacrifice. How far a good government was possible, he thought, depended upon the harmony of the people in power and the people not in power. He remarked, "efficiency combined with selfish class interests instead of producing good government is far more likely to become a mere engine of suppression of the servile classes".[24]

A good government, according to him, could be judged by its impartiality and justice, clean administration and physical facilities to the people, which raised the social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual standard of the masses. One of the essentials of a good government was that it should rise above all class considerations and conflicts. He looked for the cooperation of the people for the success of the government. He said that democracy did not grow everywhere, it must be cultivated. His thoughts on parliamentary democracy were quite in keeping with the times.

According to Ambedkar, the rule of a single party is fatal to popular government. In fact, it is a negation of popular government. He remarked, "To have popular government run by a single party is to let democracy become a mere form for despotism to play its parts from behind it." He further criticised, "despotism does not cease to be despotism because it is elective. The real guarantee against despotism is to confront it with the possibility of its dethronement, of its being laid low, of its being superseded by a rival party."[25] To him, despotism, whether native or foreign, was antithetical of freedom. One-party government meant totalitarianism that robbed man of his basic liberty and individuality. Despotism stood for the anarchy of lawless rulers and anarchy for the despotism of lawless crowd. To him, both were repulsive and were opposed to humanitarian society and government.

According to Ambedkar, "In anarchy and dictatorship liberty is lost."[26] To him, social unity among the people consisted in "the social need for protecting the best" "having common rules of morality" and "safeguarding the growth of the individual".[27] He said, "The majority rule is not accepted as a principle but it is tolerated as a rule. I might also state why it is tolerated. It is tolerated for two reasons: (1) because the majority is always a political majority and (2) because the decision of a political majority accepts and absorbs so much of the point of view of the minority that the minority does not care to rebel against the decision."[28] But like Rousseau, he was also conscious of the fact that the majority rule might not necessarily be, as it was not always, in the interest of the whole community. His main concern was to safeguard the individual against the tyranny of the majority. This he wanted to achieve by formulating a scheme of "checks and balances" on the lines of American Constitution.[29] He maintained that the will of the majority was essential for good as well as responsible government, but it should necessarily provide concessions and considerations to the will of the minorities.

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[24] Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 240.

[25] Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, pp. 74-75.

Ambedkar equated one-party system to despotism and therefore he was in favour of two-party democracy. In the first general election (1951-52) he made an electoral alliance with the PSP. The manifesto outlined in details "the battle against the poverty", and advocated a strong party in opposition. He had before his mind the British pattern. In India the possibility of a strong opposition party was not feasible only through electoral alliances but a consistent political activity was essential. But he failed to do it. He had full faith in parliamentary democracy and urged the cultivation of constitutional morality. He advocated the transformation of political democracy into a social and economic democracy. To cultivate democratic trends, he urged the creation of public conscience. He explained public conscience as conscience which became agitated at every wrong, no matter who was the sufferer and remarked that the nonscheduled castes in villages did not fight for the scheduled classes.

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26. Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, p. 317.
27. Ibid., pp. 323-25.
28. Ambedkar, *Communal Deadlock and a Way to Solve It*, p. 28.
29. Ambedkar, *Congress and Gandhi*, p. 242.

Ambedkar's foresight in defining Pakistan and the allied problems was revealed in his book on Pakistan. As early as 1940 he put the whole problem before the nation. He put forth two governing factors that determined the issue. They were the defence of India and the sentiment of Muslims. He advocated partition, because, according to him, it was only partition that would make the Hindus not only independent but free. Such an advocacy was against the sentiment of Hindus. They never visualised the partition of the country when they meant complete severance from the British. His advocacy of partition created an ill-will in the minds of the people. But though his prophecies came true, the presence and machinations of the third party (British) proved to be strong enough and brought about the national crisis. People took the partition of India as the vivisection of Indian soul and the unhealing wounds can be seen at every step. He supported united India at the beginning in the Constituent Assembly. It was his foresight to see that India remains undivided. It was the national sentiment pravailing on the eve of the independence of India. Aladi Krishnaswami Ayyar expressed his joy when in the course of his debate in the Constituent Assembly he gave unqualified support to united India.[30]

According to Ambedkar, the regional language should not be the official language of the state. He suggested that the official language of the whole nation should be Hindi. He favoured the formation of linguistic states, because he thought democracy worked better in them than in mixed provinces, and they produced social homogeneity. He supported the principle of linguistic states, particularly the United Maharashtra with Bombay as capital, from the point of view of viability of provinces. He was of opinion that linguism and communalism went hand in hand and that in linguistic provinces political power would go to the majority community. To eradicate this evil, he advocated "one state, one language" formula, because he thought it a solvent to radical and cultural conflicts. He was against the monstrous monolithic states like UP, Bihar and Maharashtra, because he felt they would be a great danger to the central government as well as to the minorities. In Maharashtra, he said, Marathas not by speech but by caste would rule. His thought on this problem should not be overlooked. The dominance of Marathas and the safety of minorities are the urgent problems of today. His consistent endeavours to protect his community could be seen even in this thought. He posed the problem of North versus South and warned about the consolidation of North. K. M. Panikkar had written a dissenting note to the Report of States Reorganisation Commission and had warned about the dominance of the North over the South. Ambedkar rightly substantiated it.

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[30] Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, p. 138.

Ambedkar looked upon the Hindu code as the pledge given by the Constitution of India. He was of opinion that the code aimed at the consolidation of Hindu society and was consistent with the Constitution and continuation of the work of framing the Constitution. As such he took keen interest in codification, but the Congress opposition made him give up the attempt. That was one of the reasons why he resigned from the cabinet. His thoughts about the codification of Hindu law were progressive and were leading to the civil code, which was really the base of secular democracy.

According to Ambedkar, India's foreign policy was based upon peace, coexistence between communism and free democracy, and nonalignment. He thought that it resulted in making India a friendless country. His suggestion of partition of Kashmir on communal basis was fatal to India. He criticised pro-Nasser attitude of Nehru (about nationalisation of Suez Canal) as disastrous. His pro-Anglo-American, anti-Soviet, pro-SEATO and anti-nonalignment policy ran counter to India's accepted foreign policy. Though he was unmistakably anti-Soviet, he was by no means pro-American and sounded a note of warning against expanding American influence. He remarked, "America with her huge capital is enslaving the world and in particular India. America is more our enemy than Britain even. American philosophy is based broadly on democracy, but in practice it is capitalistic. I fear our native capitalists. They will deceive us any moment."[31] Though he criticised American policy, still he did not consistently do any struggle to counteract the influence of that policy.

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[31] Donde, *Navayug*, Special Number.

Ambedkar had attacked nonalignment policy, and said that it had made India a friendless country. But nonalignment does not involve any lack of close relationships with other countries; it means as Pandit Nehru put it "only to keep apart from power alignments, but trying to make friendly cooperation possible". India has made large number of agreements with several countries. The second thing is that nonalignment does not mean neutrality; it is not a negative conception. Asian and African countries are coming out against imperialist domination; and world public opinion is against colonialism and racialism. India has her legitimate part in all this. But Ambedkar did not follow this path, instead he followed pro-Anglo-American policies which amounted to lining up with the reactionary forces of the world. It was a misfortune that he never realised that anti-Soviet policies led to antipeople policies. If his policies about Kashmir, Goa, SEATO and Anglo-American bloc are taken together, one can see that there were no definite principles behind them and they were reactionary.

Ambedkar's constant fear of the domination of caste Hindus compelled him to put his community before nation. He thought that he never lagged behind the demands of the country. He said that whenever there was any conflict of interests between the country and the untouchables, the untouchables' interests would take precedence over the interests of the country. He always opposed giving support to the "tyrannising majority" simply because it happened to speak in the name of the country.[32] He advocated slow Indianisation of services because he thought that "they might work out as a tyranny". He emphasised, "...for some time it will be necessary to maintain a British element in the services".[33] But owing to this attitude nationalist opinion was against him. Subhas Chandra Bose thought that "his leadership was thrust upon him by a benign British government, because his services were necessary to embarrass the national leaders".[34]

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[32] Keer, op. cit., p. 327.
[33] RTC, II Session, p. 372.
[34] Subhash Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, p. 41.

Ambedkar was the leader of the exploited section of society. That section comprised mostly workers, small peasants and landless labourers. The organisation of that section on class basis was an urgent necessity. But he and his followers did not choose that path. The Independent Labour Party (barring some exceptions) consisted of untouchable communities. The Scheduled Castes Federation was organised on the lines of the ILP, but on a wider scale. These parties served as the political platform for untouchable communities. The politicalisation of this exploited section was not on class basis. Sometimes untouchable workers joined trade unions organised by other parties; but the cleavage always remained in the nature of political loyalty versus class loyalty. These two loyalties never merged together because his insistence to place community before nation. His choice to call himself a leader of the community instead of a labour leader proved beyond doubt that the thought of community and not of class was always in his mind.

Ambedkar connected India's newly-won freedom closely with the prospects of the army. According to him, "The ultimate guarantee of the independence of a country is a safe army—any army on which you can rely to fight for the country at all times and in any eventuality."[35] But he wanted a nonpolitical army. He was quite confident that a nonpolitical army can defend India's freedom.[36] If an army had a political bias, it would always think in terms of dethroning a particular party. He warned "a political army is the greatest danger to the liberty of India. It is worse than having no army."[37]

In his later life Ambedkar became a follower of Buddha. He appreciated Buddha's attitude towards social problems and particularly private property. He said that the rules laid down by Buddha were very strict as regards private property. He emphasised the importance of Buddhism and regarded Buddhism as an alternative to Marxism. Therefore he led thousands of untouchables into the Buddhist fold and said that it was the only salvation to the depressed classes.

Marxism does not set up abstract principles for the organisa-

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35. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition*, p. 366.
36. Ibid., p. 361.
37. Ibid.

tion of society. It considers organisation of society at a particular time and place. Marxist theory, built on actual experience, guides the toiling sections of society, which inevitably leads to socialist society. But Ambedkar, a champion of the depressed classes, overlooked this principle. His behaviour led him astray; and without any class programme he embraced Buddhism. It is inconceivable how he could achieve socialism by repudiating Marxism and making Buddhism an alternative to Marxism. This is selfdeception, and channelling the whole movement of workers and peasants into reactionary and metaphysical conceptions.

The miseries of the world must be eradicated by material methods and they cannot be removed only by change of religion. The circumstances must be changed and they will not be changed by the spiritual appeal only. Ambedkar's insistence on state socialism and parliamentary democracy ran counter to his later adoption of Buddhism.

In 1937 he founded the Independent Labour Party, for some time joined hands with Bombay communists in the labour field but did not take consistent attitude and fight class battles. Though his community was downtrodden and landless and mostly wage-earners, still he could not make them class-conscious, because of the weakness in his inherent political thinking. After the Poona Pact he tried to lead the working class, but failed and left the field forever, and chose to become the leader of his community. In the second world war period, he advocated cooperation with the government and he became the member of the Viceroy's Council at a time when the "Quit India" movement was going on. It has to be noted that Muslim League did not join Viceroy's Council.

Nehru aptly called Ambedkar a "symbol of revolt". He expressed the sorrows of untouchables, tried to channel the activities of the depressed classes and bring out a force which would challenge the whole caste-ridden and untouchability-bound society. In mobilising them, he created a sense of selfrespect and pride in them, asked them to uproot this society which perpetuated social injustice.

The social reformers before Ambedkar were humanitarians, their outlook was philanthropic, and they tried to mould society on reformist lines by preaching equality and the like. Removal of untouchability was their programme. Propaganda, starting schools etc. were their methods. But Ambedkar's methods were different. No doubt he wanted all that the reformers were trying to gain, but he wanted the elevation of untouchables in social, political and economic fields; he came out with the slogan "Be a ruling race!" and put forth his separatist demands.

It was at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi that the removal of untouchability became one of the programmes of the national movement. Gandhiji was the leader of the struggle for national emancipation—a symbol of fighting nationalism. He not only emphasised political programme, but urged to strive for the removal of the curse of untouchability. He not only preached but brought into practice his contemplated social reforms in his ashrams.

The nationalist movement was spearheading the ameliorative measures; but at the same time Ambedkar, as a leader of untouchables, voiced the demands of the downtrodden humanity; and in constitutional matters he put forth separatist demands; the achievement of "separate electorates" for untouchables was his aim. The national movement under the leadership of Gandhiji tried to forge all the sanctions; the aim was to mobilise the masses under one leadership to achieve national unity for national struggle for freedom; but Ambedkar by his separatist demands came in conflict with the programmes of the national movement. The untouchables thought that the national movement opposed their supremacy but the fact was that it opposed only separatist demands. By separating untouchables from caste Hindus, Gandhiji thought, the untouchable community would be perpetually segregated socially and politically, and that would be a bar to national unity. He thought that separate electorates would simply vivisect and disrupt Hinduism. Ambedkar's struggle with the national leadership for his separatist demands made him sometimes pro-British though not antinational; and the cleavage between the national leadership and untouchable community was widened.

Ambedkar consistently opposed Congress and Gandhiji and demanded political safeguards and rights for his community. This resulted in making a cleavage between the progressive forces in the Congress and the untouchable community. The non-Brahmin section of the Hindu community first remained aloof, carried its social activities, but it realised that keeping itself aloof from the nationalist forces would not solve their problems. Had Ambedkar and his followers chosen this path, the possibility of bridging the gulf was there. The aloofness of Ambedkar and his followers resulted in weakening left forces in the country. The efforts of trade unions in fighting social inequality were not sufficient. The result was that untouchable workers did not become one with the socialist movement in the country. His separation from other powerful social and nationalist forces gave room to communal politics. His later alliances and thoughts amply proved this.

Ambedkar wanted social equality and freedom of his community from all bondage, but he did not take initiative in the fight against imperialism. His opposition to Congress and Gandhiji was equated by people as opposition to the national struggle and he was placed in the rank of Jinnah who tried to squeeze out concessions from the British government. His part in the "Deliverance Day" in December 1939 after the resignation of Congress ministries and asking J. N. Mandal to accept the ministership in the interim government as the nominee of the Muslim League was open to the possible charge of opportunism. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir Cowasjee Jahangir, Dr Ambedkar and others in a statement in October 1939 said that the record of the Congress since 1937 "belied the hope that the present Congress leaders wanted to establish real democracy in India. The Congress governments resented any opposition and wished like autocrats that no opposition should exist. Minority opinion was ignored with callous indifference." He joined in an anti-Congress chorus of moderates when Congress resigned from office and preparations were started to launch a satyagraha movement (1940) in our country. This added to the anti-Congress current in the country. His isolation from the nationalist trend weakened the movement of untouchables.

It was a gratifying thing that in shedding old prejudices Ambedkar showed himself capable of rising to the height of taking new responsibilities. He adjured his followers to place country above community in order to avoid "our independence being put into jeopardy a second time and being lost for ever". The last few years saw him harnessing his outstanding ability to constructive purpose. His hearty cooperation with the nationalist leadership brought him near the Congress and major ideological difference began to wane. He said that the actual benefits of the Constitution depended upon the men who worked it. He gave tributes to all for the success of the Constituent Assembly and said that the chaos was reduced by the cooperation of the organised Congress party. The bridging of the gulf between the national leadership and the depressed classes was a national necessity. It produced harmonious results.

AMBEDKAR—A SUCCESS?

It seems from the above that Ambedkar's thoughts on various contemporary subjects were not the same in all decades. It will be very illuminating if we trace and consider them in a chronological order.

The biggest fight that Ambedkar gave was for separate electorates to the untouchables. His underlying idea was that those who were socially segregated must be politically segregated. He gave constitutional fight for the same. A great leader like Mahatma Gandhi started his fast unto death to rectify the wrongs done by the Communal Award. If Gandhiji would have died in that fast, the untouchable community scattered over the whole subcontinent would have to live at the mercy of the touchables. With this in mind, Ambedkar accepted Poona Pact, i.e. joint electorates and reservation of seats, as the only alternative to solve the constitutional deadlock. He repented his "sentimental blunder" and in the later discussions on constitutional matters he advocated separate electorates for untouchables. When he visualised that the British were withdrawing from India, he set aside his pet thought of separate electorates, heartily cooperated with Congress in piloting the Constitution in the Constituent Assembly of India, which work won him the epithet "Modern Manu". In the Indian Constitution, there are no separate electorates. The crucial questions are: Why did Ambedkar change his views? Why did he not try to rectify his "sentimental blunder" when he was at the helm—the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the CA of India? In plain language, was it not his political defeat?

The second problem : his compromise with the national leaders. Throughout his life Ambedkar opposed Gandhiji and the Congress. It was interpreted as the antinational character of Ambedkar's leadership. When the transfer of power was in sight he changed his attitude to the Congress leadership. He visualised that effective political power would be centred in the hands of the Congress leadership. That compromise brought some healthy results. Not only that, he admitted in the Constituent Assembly that he could do this difficult job only with the solid backing of the Congress. He forgot his old position. If this kind of healthy cooperation between the national leaders and the scheduled caste community would have taken place earlier, the harvest of sweet fruits of this collaboration would have been reaped by the nation. To attempt to bring about healthy integration on a democratic basis, by burying separatist tendencies, which led to antinational and therefore pro-British channels would have saved the nation and brought about unity by bridging the gulf between the touchables and untouchables.

Ambedkar by temperament was a liberal. His liberalism was of a bourgeois type. His attitude towards reforms was liberal, and it never took a revolutionary form. His community comprised of landless labourers, small peasants and workers. To solve economic problems of the community was tantamount to waging class battles. For that it was essential to maintain class solidarity by allying with other class organisations. The object must be to defeat the class enemies. But he could not achieve this.

The dividing line between class and caste was so thin that one could not tell where caste ended and class began. The answer Ambedkar gave to Attlee—that he thought it better to call himself a community leader than to call himself a labour leader —threw a flood of light on his political thinking; and his portrait in that light seemed to be of a liberal and constitutionalist and not of a revolutionary. His insistence on community politics rather than class politics weakened the movement in the country. He insisted on change of thought as a necessary ingredient to change social behaviour patterns. This led to the dichotomy between loyalty to the class and loyalty to the community.

The nature of political leadership depends upon attitude and ability to wage class battles. The form, revolutionary or otherwise, depends upon this attitude; but because of his liberalism Ambedkar did not pursue a consistent policy of solidifying class institutions, and turn caste battles into class battles.

Ambedkar knew his limitations and worked as a community leader. He tried his level best to serve his community by trying to further education, services, representation in legislatures for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Not only that, he admitted in unequivocal terms that he entered the CA only to serve his community. He did his job efficiently; and the thought that his community was at his back to support him only enhanced his confidence. The downtrodden community not only supported him; but he was worshipped like god and, "In the near future, you will have kingdom of Bhim"—थोड़े दिन में भीमराज—became the slogan of his followers.

The dichotomy between the national leadership and the leadership of the depressed classes became manifest. Congress leaders like Mahatma Gandhi were trying to consolidate all the exploited sections of the Indian community under one national leadership. Indian nationalism took not only anti-British attitude, but its aim became anti-imperialist, anticolonial, antiracial and for that matter it proclaimed its object to end exploitation of man by man and nation by nation. Attempts were afoot to transform it into a weapon of anti-imperialist struggle. But Ambedkar did not take any cognisance of these attempts. His opposition to Congress and Gandhiji became bitter at a time when Congress waged its last battle—"do or die". The section of the depressed classes which joined Congress or which did not join Scheduled Castes Federation was seen with suspicion by his followers. Those who joined the Congress got official posts. It brought division among his followers; and compromise with the national leadership was hailed by many as inevitable. This division in the Scheduled Castes Federation, and after his death in the Republican Party of India, became manifest. One section in the Republican Party of India became pro-Congress and election alliances were made with that section. It demoralised and weakened the Republican Party of India. The Congress leadership carried out opportunist policies; it was not consistent and did not follow definite principles. Ambedkar was given the law portfolio, and he was kept "untouchable" from other important portfolios. It did not prove that the cabinet had any foresight in dealing with the situation. If Congress-Ambedkar cooperation had continued further it would have achieved good results and the gulf between touchables and untouchables would have been bridged altogether. To bring this about the common man must be taken into confidence; but the common man from the depressed classes was in no way in the picture.

The Republican Party of India does not act as an open political party. No new elements enter into it except depressed classes—untouchables. The followers of Ambedkar look to it as the weapon for solving social and economic problems only; but election alliances with other political parties, especially the Congress, became the regular feature of the leaders. The inert rank and file cannot follow their leaders. The legacy of Ambedkar's bourgeois liberalism has thrown the followers overboard only to take opportunist positions.

After his resignation as a law member, Ambedkar became a leader of opposition, made speeches in parliament, but they were ineffective. His historic work in constitution-making was nullified by his threat to burn it. He considered the Constitution as a pious temple; but, according to him, it was occupied by men not of integrity and character. His indignation at the Congress leaders made him their blind critic, and as a last resort he found spiritual solace in Buddhism. As other great men of the world he engaged himself in philosophising and theorising, and regarded the dhamma of Buddha as the only religion. Instead of individual intellectual conviction, he brought about mass conversion of untouchables to Buddhism. He found a solution to the social and economic problems in Buddha's dhamma! The spiritual solution of the material problems of millions of depressed people was not a potent solution.

The historic controversy over separate or joint electorates is now over. There are no separate electorates in the Indian Constitution. But one section of the followers of Ambedkar is again pressing the demand for separate electorates for the depressed classes. It is difficult to know how this demand is consistent with the later position of Ambedkar. If such separatist politics is to be continued in Ambedkar's name then it means that people have learnt nothing from the experience of the last fifty years. Even Ambedkar did not open the question of separate electorates in the Constituent Assembly. It is high time that the scheduled castes leaders note this lesson and chalk out their programme.

"No satyagraha for rights" was the policy followed and preached by Ambedkar. Then how the untouchables would get their rights which were trampled under feet by the touchables? How the landless labourers, small peasants and workers could get their demands if they did not align with other fellow workers? Is it possible to get the demands by liberal methods only? A party of the exploited must rally under its revolutionary leadership all the exploited sections. This becomes a reality only when the mobilisation of the exploited is done on a massive scale

A political party is solidified by agitation on day-to-day problems. But the immobility of the party of the depressed classes is a hindrance to the development of such a party. New recruits (except from scheduled castes) are not mobilised under the leadership of the party of the depressed classes—i.e. Republican Party of India. On the contrary the workers of the Republican Party of India join other political parties, and get big posts. Under these circumstances, a united front or unity of like parties becomes imperative. The programme before this front essentially covers the class programme for the exploited. One party for social uplift and another for political aims—this dichotomy must be ended. The touchable communities must take part in social emancipation ending economic exploitation, and therefore the political advance of the depressed classes.

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